



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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President Biden Takes Action to Help the Postal Service

On Wednesday President **Joe Biden** [nominated three people](#) to serve on the Postal Board of Governors: **Ron Stroman**, a former deputy postmaster general; **Amber McReynolds**, chief executive of the National Vote at Home Institute; and **Anton Hajjar**, former general counsel of the American Postal Workers Union. On Thursday, White House Press Secretary **Jen Psaki** said that President Biden wants “better” Postal Service leadership. The Postmaster General reports to the Postal Service Board of Governors.

The announcement followed a House Committee on Oversight and Reform hearing about how to strengthen the U.S. Postal Service’s financial footing. Committee members and witnesses discussed the USPS Fairness Act, S. 145 and H.R. 695, which would get rid of the agency’s requirement to pre-fund future retirement health benefits for employees.



Members also questioned Postmaster General **Louis DeJoy** about his so-called cost-cutting and efficiency strategies that have resulted in widespread service delay. During his testimony, DeJoy blamed “unachievable service standards” for first class mail problems and suggested that lowering standards and raising prices will continue to be part of his strategic vision.

Postmaster General DeJoy delivers his testimony at the House Oversight Committee hearing on Wednesday.

“The Post Office is a vital institution that millions of Americans, particularly seniors and retirees, rely on,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Millions of seniors rely on

prompt delivery for their needed prescriptions. Last year’s election saw record numbers of ballots cast by mail. We urge the Senate to speedily confirm President Biden’s nominees so they can begin to strengthen and preserve the Postal Service.”

Coronavirus Stimulus Relief Package Closer to Passage

The U.S. House of Representatives [is set to vote](#) on President Biden’s \$1.9 trillion coronavirus stimulus package today.

[The package includes](#) another round of \$1,400 stimulus checks for people earning up to \$75,000 and couples earning \$150,000, a \$15 minimum wage increase, rental assistance, expanded and extended unemployment benefits, support for low-income families and older Americans, and several other components that aim to stimulate economic relief.

However, yesterday the Senate Chief Senate Parliamentarian **Elizabeth MacDonough** [determined that](#) the \$15 minimum wage increase does not adhere to the Senate’s budget rules and cannot be included in the Senate version.

“This legislation must be passed and put on President Biden’s desk quickly,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Too many Americans are hurting and can’t wait for relief.”

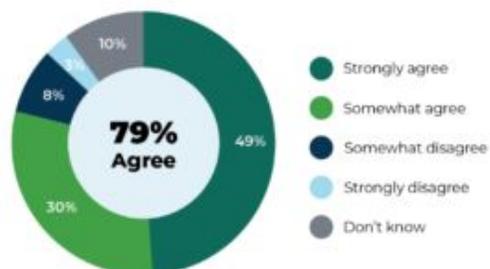
Coronavirus Pandemic Has Had a Negative Impact on Retirement Security

A [new report](#) from the National Institute on Retirement Security shows that the pandemic has intensified working Americans’ worries about retirement, with more than half reporting that COVID-19 has increased their concerns about maintaining their economic security when they retire.

This concern spanned party lines in the survey, with majorities of Democrats (70 percent), Republicans (62 percent), and Independents (70 percent) agreeing that the nation is in the midst of a retirement crisis. Most respondents expressed support for Social Security and pensions, with nearly 80 percent saying that earned benefits should remain a priority, and the majority agreeing that pensions are better for retirement security than 401(k) savings accounts.

“Americans from both parties are rightly concerned that they won’t be able to make ends meet when they retire,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Congress must provide greater retirement security by strengthening pensions and expanding Social Security benefits for current and future retirees.”

The vast majority of Americans say Social Security should remain a priority regardless of budget deficits.



KHN: Countless Homebound Patients Still Wait for Covid Vaccine Despite Seniors' Priority

By Judith Graham, *Kaiser Health News*



Dr. Steven Landers, president and CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association Health Group, administers the Covid-19 vaccine to Sam Ferguson of Asbury Park, New Jersey.

Opening another front in the nation's response to the pandemic, medical centers and other health organizations have begun sending doctors and nurses to apartment buildings and private homes to vaccinate homebound seniors.

Boston Medical Center, which runs the oldest in-home medical service in the country, started doing this Feb. 1. Wake Forest Baptist Health, a North Carolina health system, followed a week later.

In Miami Beach, Florida, fire department paramedics are delivering vaccines to frail seniors in their own homes. In East St. Louis, Illinois, a visiting nurse service is offering at-home vaccines to low-income, sick older adults who receive food from Meals on Wheels.

In central and northern Pennsylvania, Geisinger Health, a large health system, has identified 500 older homebound adults and is bringing vaccines to them. Nationally, the Department of Veterans Affairs has provided more than 11,000 vaccines to veterans who receive primary medical care at home.

These efforts and others like them recognize a compelling need: Between 2 million and 4.4 million older adults are homebound. Most are in their 80s and have multiple medical conditions, such as

heart failure, cancer, and chronic lung disease, and many are cognitively impaired. They cannot leave their homes or can do so only with considerable difficulty.

By virtue of their age and medical status, these seniors are at extremely high risk of becoming seriously ill and dying if they get Covid-19. Yet, unlike similarly frail nursing home patients, they haven't been recognized as a priority group for vaccines, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention only recently offered [guidance on serving them](#).

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.