



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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April 30, 2021

New Congressional Voting Record Report Available

The Alliance released its [2020 Congressional Voting Record](#), which scored each U.S. Senator and Representative on critical retirement security issues this week.

“Almost every member of Congress claims to care about older Americans,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “This report considers key House and Senate floor votes to determine who actually stood up for seniors in the midst of a global pandemic. It is a tragedy that more than 443,000 Americans 65-years-old and older died of COVID-19.”

The annual report reviewed 10 Senate and House floor votes including bills and amendments to address the pandemic by providing funds to improve health and safety in nursing homes and fund coronavirus treatments and vaccines; adequately fund the Postal Service to ensure the delivery of prescription medications; stop the repeal of the Affordable Care Act; and protect older workers from discrimination.

Forty-seven members of the U.S. Senate and 214 members of the U.S. House of Representatives earned perfect 100 percent scores. Thirty-seven senators earned scores of 20% or below, including **John Thune** (SD, 11%); **Charles Grassley** (IA, 20%), **Ron Johnson** (WI, 20%) and **Mitch McConnell** (KY, 20%). Eighty-six House members earned a score of 0%.

Both the national 2020 Congressional Voting Record and a version for each state delegation is available online at <https://retiredamericans.org/voting-record>.

President Biden's Joint Address to Congress Promises More Action To Help Older Americans Recover from the Pandemic

President **Biden** presented his \$1.8 trillion [American Families Plan](#) during his Joint Address to Congress on Wednesday night. The plan aims to expand anti-poverty measures the administration implemented in the wake of the Covid-19 crisis and prioritizes helping working- and middle-class Americans, including seniors.

The proposal calls for a national comprehensive paid family and medical leave program that will ensure that working adults can receive partial wage replacement to take time to tend to family

members. The program will provide workers up to \$4,000 a month, with a minimum of two-thirds of average weekly wages replaced, rising to 80 percent for the lowest wage workers.



President Biden with Vice President Harris (left) and Speaker Pelosi on Wednesday

The White House estimates nine million people will save hundreds of dollars on their insurance premiums per year through the plan, and four million uninsured people will gain coverage. It will achieve those results through permanent tax credits.

The plan would be funded in large part by asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share, raising about \$1.5 trillion over the next decade. President Biden called for raising the income taxes on the wealthiest one percent of earners to 39.6%, reversing one of the 2017 tax cut's largest giveaways to the wealthy.

“This plan will strengthen and invest in working class families and return fairness to the tax code,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We were also encouraged that President Biden called on Congress to enact legislation to allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices for all Americans.”

Senate Committee Advances Biden's Nominees for USPS Board

President Biden's three nominees to the U.S. Postal Service's Board of Governors, **Anton Hajjar**, **Amber McReynolds** and **Ronald Stroman**, were [approved](#) Wednesday by the Senate Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committee. A full Senate floor vote on their nominations is expected soon.

Each of the nominees has vowed to ensure USPS service is not further eroded if they are confirmed.

Seniors' Face a Financial Double Whammy: Escalating Drug Prices and Low Social Security COLAs

A new [report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office](#) (GAO) released this week found that net prices for prescription drugs in the United States for 20 selected brand-name products were two to four times higher than the prices for the same drugs in Canada, Australia and France.

At the same time, the cost of other goods and services retirees need are climbing at a much faster pace than the [1.3% cost-of-living adjustment \(COLA\)](#) that Social Security beneficiaries received in January. The numbers point to a significant loss of buying power for seniors that Congress should address.

“Seniors are facing two interrelated problems. Social Security COLAs do not adequately take into account the goods and services that older Americans must spend money on, including health care, energy bills and prescription drugs,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, Alliance President. “Congress must change the formula for calculating the COLA so it takes into account what seniors actually purchase. They must also take on the pharmaceutical corporations and require Medicare to negotiate lower prices. The United States should not be paying the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs.”

May Day to Commemorate Workers Around the World as Senate Considers the PRO Act



Saturday, May 1 is International Workers’ Day, or May Day, a holiday to celebrate all workers and the efforts of trade unions and the labor movement. It is also a day of remembrance, since activists chose this day to honor the workers who died during the Haymarket affair bombing in 1886 in Chicago while protesting for an eight-hour workday.

“The best thing we can do to honor workers is urge senators to pass the [PRO Act](#), H.R. 842, which makes it easier to join or form a union,” said **President Roach**. “Union workers earn more and can negotiate for

Missouri Alliance members at PRO Act/Medicaid Expansion rally in Jefferson City on Tuesday

benefits such as health care, pensions and employer contributions to retirement plans, which means higher income in retirement.”

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.