



# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)

Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

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## Happy Anniversary to the Alliance

This month the Alliance for Retired Americans is celebrating its 20th anniversary. Over the years, Alliance members have blocked efforts to privatize Social Security and Medicare, added a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, protected millions of Americans' earned benefits, and elected hundreds of candidates who understand the needs of seniors. Those are just a handful of our accomplishments, and we aren't done yet.

"Together we have brought a greater understanding of multiple policy issues affecting retirees at the local, state and federal level, from Capitol Hill to the White House," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "We have grown to 4.4 million members and we thank each of you as we continue working to strengthen retirement security for all Americans."

"While it is important to recognize our achievements and wins, there is much more to do. We must expand Social Security and make the wealthiest pay their fair share into the future. It's time for Medicare to cover important medical treatments including dental, hearing and vision. And we must get Congress to take on the powerful pharmaceutical corporations that raise the prices of prescription drugs every year without fail."

## Nursing Homes Look to Protect Against Lawsuits by Invoking Trump Administration's Policy

Nursing homes are attempting to defend themselves from a slew of wrongful death lawsuits brought by the relatives of Covid-19 victims by relying on the broad interpretation of [liability protections](#) by the previous Administration as the coronavirus ravaged the facilities. Thirty-percent of people who died from COVID-19 lived or worked in nursing homes.

Nearly 200 lawsuits have been filed, and the industry expects many more in the coming months. Dozens of the nursing facilities facing multimillion-dollar wrongful death lawsuits are pleading with judges to transfer the cases from state to federal courts, where they may take advantage of new federal liability safeguards and perhaps escape hefty compensation awards.

While some federal judges have approved the request to change venues, most of the complaints are still unresolved, and judges have denied nursing facilities' efforts to move sites in at least 30

other cases. However, even if the courts reject the venue change, legal experts warn that appeals might drag out cases for months or even years, discouraging others from launching challenges.

“It is important that nursing homes be held accountable when they are liable for wrongdoing,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Grieving family members should not have to spend thousands of dollars in legal fees fighting over what court should hear their claims.”

## Senate Confirms Chiquita Brooks-LaSure to Run the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

President **Biden's** candidate to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), **Chiquita Brooks-LaSure**, was confirmed by the Senate on Tuesday, making her the first Black woman to hold the crucial health policy job.



Brooks-LaSure was confirmed as CMS administrator by a [55-44](#) vote in the Senate. She will oversee the Biden administration's goal of expanding the number of Americans receiving health insurance through the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Brooks-LaSure was a leader in the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) during President **Obama's** term, administering the ACA.

Five Republicans joined the Democrats in supporting her confirmation: Sens. **Roy Blunt** (MO), **Richard Burr** (NC), **Susan Collins** (ME), **Jerry Moran** (KS) and **Lisa Murkowski** (AK).

“We are thrilled to have Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, a health care expert who fully appreciates the needs of older Americans, running CMS,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We look forward to working with her to ensure Medicare and Medicaid remain strong and allow seniors to get the health care they need.”

## KHN: Stark Racial Disparities Persist in Vaccinations, State-Level CDC Data Shows

By Hannah Recht and Rachana Pradhan and Lauren Weber, *Kaiser Health News*

Black Americans' Covid-19 vaccination rates are still lagging months into the nation's campaign, while Hispanics are closing the gap and Native Americans show the highest rates overall, according to federal data obtained by KHN.

The data, provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in response to a public records request, gives a sweeping national look at the race and ethnicity of vaccinated people on a state-by-state basis. Yet nearly half of those vaccination records are missing race or ethnicity information.

KHN's analysis shows that only 22% of Black Americans have gotten a shot, and Black rates still trail those of whites in almost every state.

Targeted efforts have raised vaccination rates among other minority groups. Hispanics in eight states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are now vaccinated at higher rates than

non-Hispanic whites. Yet 29% of Hispanics are vaccinated nationally, compared with 33% of whites.

While 45% of Native Americans have received at least one dose, stark differences exist depending on where they live. And Asian vaccination rates are high in most states, with 41% getting a shot.

The analysis underscores how [vaccine disparities](#) have improved as availability has opened up and Biden administration officials have attempted to prioritize equitable distribution. Still, gaps persist even as minority groups have suffered much [higher mortality rates](#) from the pandemic than whites and are at risk of infection as states move to reopen and lift mask mandates.

[Click here to read more.](#)

## Remembering Those Who Died Serving the Country

Memorial Day will be observed this Monday, May 31, and the Alliance joins all Americans in paying tribute to our heroes who gave their lives defending the nation.



**UNION-MADE MEMORIAL DAY**

**DRINKS**

- ANCHOR STEAM
- FAIR STATE BREWING COOPERATIVE
- MINUTE MAID
- PABST BLUE RIBBON

**SNACKS**

- CHEEZ-IT CRACKERS
- ENTENMANN'S CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES
- LAY'S POTATO CHIPS
- POTATO SALAD FROM ALBERTSONS, COSTCO OR VONS

**HOT DOGS**

- BALL PARK
- FARMER JOHN
- OSCAR MAYER

**DESSERTS**

- BREYERS ICE CREAM
- SARA LEE APPLE OR CHERRY PIE
- TILLAMOOK ICE CREAM

**AFLCIO.ORG/MADEINAMERICA**

“Memorial Day is a day to remember all those who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country,” said Executive Director **Fiesta**. “It is important to remember those who died, be there for our friends and family who lost those close to them, and appreciate the ultimate sacrifice that many members of the armed forces made.”

## Alliance Mourns Those Lost in Latest Senseless Shooting

The Alliance is once again deeply saddened by another mass shooting in the United States. Nine members of the Amalgamated Transit Unit were killed when their coworker opened fire at the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority hub in San Jose, California.

“The latest episode of violence occurred during a meeting of union members and hit the labor community especially hard,” said President **Roach**. “The Alliance joins the many union members who are grieving as we remember this week’s victims, and we send our deepest sympathies to their surviving colleagues, friends and family members. We must redouble our efforts as a nation to put an end to these acts of violence.”

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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.