



2021
Anniversary Summer Toolkit
Medicare/Medicaid
Social Security

2021 Anniversary Summer Toolkit

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2021 Anniversary Toolkit How to Use This Toolkit

Welcome to Anniversary Summer. This year is the 56th and 86th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid, and Social Security, respectively. The Alliance will work all summer to support your efforts to celebrate these milestones as a means to protect and strengthen the programs and earned benefits of all Americans.

As a means of continuing our mobilization, we will petition and lobby members of congress, collect stories of individual and collective experiences and hold anniversary observances to frame and bring attention to the threads of our most critical earned benefits and demand action to address the escalating cost of prescription drugs.

This toolkit contains three sections. The first section contains all the fact sheet and position papers you will need this summer. The second contains mobilization materials for holding zoom or in person anniversary events and present Zero/Hero awards and in the third section you will find everything needed to request, hold and report on virtual district lobby meetings with representatives.

Position Papers

Familiarize yourself with the Alliance Position Papers on the legislation that is in play during the 2021 Anniversary Summer. These position papers correspond with the Lobby Day Talking Points and Lobby Visit Report Back Form we have included in this toolkit for your legislative visits.

- **Social Security and Medicare Facts and Figures** – All you need to know about Social Security and Medicare in 2021. This is the most updated information about average benefits, eligibility, cost of living adjustments and more.
- **Position Paper: Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act** – H.R. 3 repeals the law prohibiting the government to negotiate for lower drugs prices. We urge the US House to pass this legislation and for the Senate to take up one that is similar.
- **Position Paper: Pandemic Treatment Access and Affordability Act** – A pandemic should not be an opportunity to profit. This critical piece of legislation would make it illegal.
- **Position Paper: Trust Act** – Dangerous legislation authored by Sen. Mitt Romney (R-UT) and Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) that could fast track cuts to earned Social Security benefits.
- **Social Security Fairness Act** – H.R. 82 would repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.



2021 Anniversary Toolkit

How to Use This Toolkit

Mobilization

This toolkit is designed to support your work advancing the retiree agenda for your activism as well as a means to engage partners and affiliates. Members and activists can take coordinated and individual actions and can share with and enlist others to organize with the Alliance for Retired Americans to build a larger community of strength.

Planning your Anniversary Event

This summer, anniversary events may happen in person – by following CDC guidelines – or may happen over Zoom to ensure everyone who wants may attend and is comfortable. This toolkit contains a planning guide and sample agenda.

Sharing Your Story

Personal stories about how Social Security, Medicare and the cost of prescription drugs impact us help highlight why we are advocates. For this reason, we have included our Personal Storytelling minikit. Before your anniversary events or legislative lobby visit, take time in a group to go through this minikit and for everyone to use the worksheet to outline one of their stories.

Personal storytelling is one of the most powerful tools for change. As you and your group collect and hone your personal stories, share them with Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org for inclusion in future advocacy actions.

Letters to the Editor

Anniversary Summer is a great season for writing letters to your area editors. Included in this toolkit are sample letters that correspond to the legislation on retiree issues in play this summer outlined throughout this toolkit.

Lobby Visits

Scheduling Your Visit

Included is a full lobby kit to use during your legislative visits. Read through each step. When you are ready, contact your local congressional offices to request meetings for your group with members of the House, Senate and or staff. The Alliance zoom account is



2021 Anniversary Toolkit How to Use This Toolkit

available to host your meetings if it is helpful. [Use this tracker for this and any other requests.](#)

Schedule a pre-visit meeting with your group to organize speaking order as well as legislative asks. Bring the Lobby Day Talking Points, position papers and the Report Back Form to the meeting.

Reporting Back

During your meeting, use the Lobby Visit Report Back Form to structure your legislative asks and record the answers you hear. Be sure to take pictures or screenshots of your visit. Immediately following your visit, debrief with your group and make sure you have all the responses for the form. [Complete the online report back form](#) and send pictures to Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org.

Questions? Email Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org with any question or request.

July 2021

June '21							August '21						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30				29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4 Independence Day	5 Independence Day (Observed)	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 National Anniversary Summer Kickoff Zoom Event	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 56th Anniversary of Medicare & Medicaid	31

- =House and Senate Recess
- =Senate Recess Only
- =House Recess Only
- Blue Text** =Federal Holiday, National Offices Closed
- Green Text** =Holiday
- Red Text** =Alliance Dates of Note

August 2021

July '21							September '21						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3				1	2	3	4
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	26	27	28	29	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14 86th Anniversary of Social Security
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4

- =House and Senate Recess
- =Senate Recess Only
- =House Recess Only
- Blue Text =Federal Holiday, National Offices Closed
- Green Text =Holiday
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Social Security and Medicare: Current Facts and Figures

The Many Faces of Social Security

- Nearly 180 million workers contribute to Social Security through payroll taxes.
- Nearly 65 million people receive monthly Social Security benefits:
 - 49.4 million people receive retirement benefits
 - 5.8 million people receive survivors' benefits
 - 9.6 million people receive disability benefits.

Average 2021 Monthly Social Security Benefit

- A retired worker: \$1,543
- A retired couple: \$2,596
- Disabled worker: \$1,277
- Disabled worker with spouse and child: \$2,224
- Widow or widower: \$1,453
- Young widow or widower with two children: \$3,001
- Maximum Monthly Social Security Benefit: \$3,148 (for worker retiring at Full Retirement Age).

Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2021: 1.3%

2021 Social Security and Medicare Contribution Amounts

Social Security: 6.2% for both workers and employers. This contribution is paid on earnings up to \$142,800.

Medicare: 1.45% for both workers and employers on all wages.

2020 Social Security Eligibility

Full Retirement Age: 66

Early Retirement Age: 62 (taking early retirement can reduce Social Security benefits up to 29.2 percent)

Social Security: When and How to Apply for Benefits

Generally, you should apply for Social Security benefits four months before the date you want your benefits to begin. Click here for more information on when you can apply for Social Security: <https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/>. You can apply in one of the following ways:

- Visit your local Social Security office. Call 1-800-772-1213 to find the nearest office.
- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can call Social Security at TTY 1-800-325-0778.
- Online: <https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib>

The Many Faces of Medicare

- Nearly 180 million workers contribute to Medicare through payroll taxes.
- Approximately 62.7 million people receive Medicare benefits, including:
 - 54.3 million people age 65 and older
 - 8.4 million people with disabilities

2021 Medicare Part A (Hospital Coverage)

Deductible: \$1,484 (first 60 days of Medicare-covered inpatient hospital care)

Coinsurance: \$0 (Days 1-60), \$371 per day (Days 61-90)

2021 Medicare Part B (Physician Coverage)

For all beneficiaries: Part B deductible is \$203 and the Part B copayment is 20%.

Individual's Income in 2019	Couple's Income in 2019	Your 2021 Part B Monthly Premium
\$88,000 or less	\$176,000 or less	\$148.50
\$88,001-\$111,000	\$176,001-\$222,000	\$207.90
\$111,001-\$138,000	\$222,001-\$276,000	\$297.00
\$138,001-\$165,000	\$276,001-\$330,000	\$386.10
\$165,001-\$499,999	\$330,001-\$749,999	\$475.20
\$500,000 and Above	\$750,000 and Above	\$504.90

2021 Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage)

Monthly Premium: Varies by plan (higher-income consumers may pay more)

Deductible: Varies by plan, \$445 maximum

Doughnut Hole: \$4,130 - \$6,550. Beneficiaries in the doughnut hole will receive a 75% discount for both brand-name and generic drugs.

Cap on Out-of-pocket Costs: \$6,550 (prior to catastrophic, includes discounts)

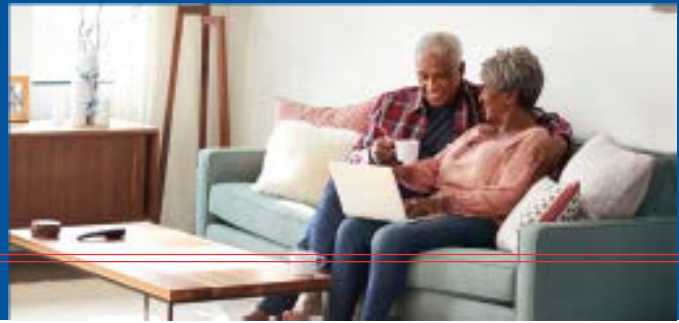
In addition to a monthly plan premium, high-income individuals will pay an income-related monthly adjustment amount as noted below:

Individual's Income in 2019	Couple's Income in 2019	Income-related monthly adjustment amount
\$88,000 or below	\$176,000 or below	\$0.00
\$88,001 - \$111,000	\$176,001 - \$222,000	\$12.30
\$111,001 - \$138,000	\$222,001 - \$276,000	\$31.80
\$138,001 - \$165,000	\$276,001 - \$330,000	\$51.20
\$165,001 - \$499,999	\$330,001 - \$749,999	\$70.70
\$500,000 and Above	\$750,000 and Above	\$77.10

Medicare: When and How to Apply for Benefits

Medicare is available for people age 65 or older, younger people with disabilities and people with End Stage Renal Disease. If you sign up after you turn 65, you may be penalized unless you have other coverage.

For information about when to apply for Medicare go to www.medicare.gov. To apply for Medicare, call 1-800-772-1213 or visit www.medicare.gov.



House Drug Price Negotiation Bill - H.R. 3

On April 22, 2021, Representatives Frank Pallone (NJ), Richard Neal (MA) and Bobby Scott (VA) introduced the **Elijah E. Cummings Lower Drug Costs Now Act** (H.R. 3). The bill allows the government to negotiate lower drug prices for people covered by Medicare and private insurance.

H.R. 3 repeals current law that prohibits the federal government from negotiating lower drug prices. It requires that the Secretary of Health and Human Services negotiate on up to 250 of the most expensive drugs, including insulin. The negotiated amount would be available to all payers, thus allowing workers covered by employer-sponsored plans to also benefit from the price reductions.

Alliance for Retired Americans Position

The Alliance for Retired Americans supports H.R. 3 and urges Congress to quickly pass this legislation.

In particular, the Alliance supports drug negotiations as the best way to reduce costs for Medicare beneficiaries and all Americans in group health insurance plans. We also support the H.R. 3 provisions that cap drug price increases in Medicare Parts B and D and limit out-of-pocket costs for Medicare beneficiaries.

Limiting Prices to International Drug Index

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. According to a March 29, 2021 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), in 2020 Americans paid two to four times more for 20 brand-named drugs than people in Canada, France and Australia.

H.R. 3 brings drug prices in the United States more in line with those in other industrialized nations. Prices would be limited to 120% of the average costs of the drug in six other countries (Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Australia and Japan).

Excise Tax on Drug Corporation Profits

Drug corporations that refuse to negotiate or those that don't comply with the agreement would be subject to a 65% to 95% excise on their gross sales.

Limit Increase in Drug Prices under Medicare Parts B and D

The bill limits the increase in drug prices under Medicare Parts B and D to the cost of inflation. The base year is set at 2016; thus, drug companies that have increased their prices since then would have to lower them or pay a rebate to the government.

Cap on Out-of-Pocket Drug Spending under Medicare

H.R. 3 caps out-of-pocket spending for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 a year. Currently, there is no cap on out-of-pocket spending. Out-of-pocket spending continues to escalate each year, particularly for specialty drugs -- high-cost prescription medications used to treat complex, chronic conditions like rheumatoid arthritis, multiple sclerosis, and cancer. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, the average out-of-pocket spending for 28 of 30 specialty drugs is \$8,109 per year.

Invest in New Treatments and Cures

Negotiating lower prices would save taxpayers \$450 billion per year, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Under H.R. 3, those savings would be reinvested in the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration to support their research missions.



Pandemic Treatment Access and Affordability (PTAA) Act

Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Peter DeFazio (D-OR) introduced the Pandemic Treatment Access and Affordability (PTAA) Act, H.R. 597, on January 28, 2021. Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. H.R. 597 establishes critical protections against drug price gouging amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The federal government has spent tens of billions of taxpayer dollars on research and development (R&D) of vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, including \$23 billion for manufacturing and purchasing. Despite this public investment, there is no guarantee that these taxpayer-funded drugs will be affordable, accessible, or available to all those who need them.

Alliance for Retired Americans Position

The Alliance urges Congress to sponsor and pass H.R. 597, which prohibits price gouging during a pandemic or health emergency.

All Americans should have access to affordable medications, treatments and vaccines. Furthermore, any medicines, treatments or vaccines developed with taxpayer dollars should be available and affordable to everyone.

Access to COVID-19 Drugs for All Who Need Them

By prohibiting exclusive licensing and ending monopoly control, H.R. 597 ensures universal access to all taxpayer-funded drugs used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

Ensures Affordability

H.R. 597 mandates reasonable and affordable pricing for new, taxpayer-funded drugs that are used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

Greater Transparency

Drug corporations must publicly report specific breakdowns of their total expenditures, including the amount which came from taxpayer dollars, related to any drug used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

Prevents Price Gouging

H.R. 597 blocks excessive pricing of drugs used to treat any disease that causes a public health emergency, not just the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Drug price gouging is an on-going threat;
- Drug corporations used a \$50 billion windfall from the 2017 tax bill for stock buybacks rather than lowering prices or investing in the development of new drugs;
- Drug prices continue to escalate. In 2020, drug corporations raised the prices of more than 400 drugs by more than five percent with no explanation;
- Remdesivir was developed with \$70.5 million of taxpayer dollars, yet there is no requirement that the medication be affordable. In fact, on June 29, 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, Gilead increased the price of their drug Remdesivir -- one of the drugs approved to treat COVID 19 -- by 30% to \$3,120 for a five-day treatment.



Oppose the TRUST Act

Sen. Mitt Romney (UT) and Rep. Mike Gallagher (WI) introduced the Time to Rescue United States' Trusts (TRUST) Act, S.1295 and H.R. 2575, on April 21, 2021.

The bill paves the way to cuts in Social Security and Medicare.

Alliance for Retired Americans Position

The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly opposes the TRUST Act.

Retirees have earned their Social Security and Medicare benefits over a lifetime of work. The benefits ensure older Americans receive the health care they need, and they provide necessary income for more than 60 million Americans. These benefits are critical and they should not be cut.

We ask all Senators and members of Congress to reject the TRUST Act and any future bills or amendments that aim to make dangerous changes or cuts to these essential earned benefits.

Background

The Rescue Committees

Each committee will have 12 members, appointed by the House Speaker and Minority Leader and the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders. Their deliberations would not include public hearings or input.

The committees can consider dramatic changes to Social Security and Medicare that could dismantle these essential programs such as benefit cuts, changing the eligibility age, means testing benefits, or raising taxes on working Americans.

Members of the House or Senate committees with jurisdiction over these programs, the House Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Finance, could make suggestions, but the Rescue Committees are not required to accept them.

Trust Fund Solvency

Senator Romney falsely claims that the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds are in danger and that dramatic changes are necessary.

In fact, the Social Security Trust Funds can pay full benefits until 2035 and 79% benefits after that. Requiring the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share into the system would extend solvency beyond 2035.

The Medicare Trust Fund is also solvent, and can be further strengthened by reining in the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs by allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower prices. There is no justification for secret committees that leave out public testimony to fundamentally change or cut the benefits Americans work a lifetime to earn.

An Anti-Democratic Process

Each Rescue Committee's report can be approved by a simple majority vote of its members. Once approved, the report would become a bill and would then be sent to the House and Senate committees of jurisdiction.

The House and Senate committees would review and discuss the bill, but they could not amend it. The bill would then go to the House and Senate floors for an up or down majority vote.

There is no justification for secret committees to provide political cover for Congress to cut Social Security and Medicare.



The Social Security Fairness Act

On The Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) were enacted in 1977 and 1983 respectively as amendments to the basic Social Security law.

These provisions reduce Social Security benefits for public sector retirees who receive a public pension or the spouse or survivor of a Social Security beneficiary who worked for a period of time in a job not covered by the Social Security program.

More than 2.5 million Social Security beneficiaries are affected by one of both these provisions, and they do not receive the full Social Security benefits that they otherwise earned. The WEP and GPO disproportionately affect lower-income workers. As a result, many face economic hardship during retirement.

Alliance for Retired Americans Position

In 2021, Senators Sherrod Brown (OH) and Susan Collins (ME) and Representatives Rodney Davis (IL) and Abigail Spanberger (VA) introduced the Social Security Fairness Act (S. 1302 and H.R. 82). The bills would repeal the WEP and GPO provisions and allow those affected to keep the full Social Security benefits they or their spouses earned.

The Alliance supports the Social Security Fairness Act and urges members of Congress to co-sponsor and help pass this important legislation.

The Windfall Elimination Provision

The WEP reduces the Social Security benefits of a public sector worker who collects a pension from a job not covered by Social Security. Four percent of retired workers, or nearly 2 million retirees, were affected as of December 2019. These workers are retired federal, state and local government employees who worked as teachers, police, firefighters, postal workers and general employees.

The WEP provision was intended to reduce what Congress considered overly-generous Social Security payments; however, the adjustment formula does not differentiate between high- and low-wage workers. As a result, retirees who earned lower wages at work are disproportionately hurt by the WEP.

The Government Pension Offset

The GPO reduces Social Security spousal or survivor retirement benefits of a worker who collects a public pension from a job not covered by Social Security. The individual's Social Security spousal or survivors benefits are reduced by two-thirds of the amount of their government pension. The reduction is recalculated each year, when the retiree receives a cost-of-living increase in their pension, further reducing the benefit. In some cases, if two-thirds of the individual's government pension is greater than their Social Security spousal benefits, those Social Security benefits are reduced to zero.

As of December 2019, 707,879 Social Security beneficiaries had their spousal or survivor benefits completely eliminated or partially reduced by the GPO. The GPO has a particularly harsh effect on moderate and low income pensioners. Eighty-three percent of Americans subject to the GPO are women, who are already more likely to fall into poverty as they age.

Which public sector workers and retirees are affected?

- Many teachers in 15 states—Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine, Missouri, Nevada, Ohio, Rhode Island and Texas;
- Many state, county, city and special district employees around the country; and
- Federal employees in every state (hired before January 1, 1984) who are in the CSRS retirement system.



How to Structure Your Anniversary Event 2021

This year is the 56th and 86th anniversary of Medicare and Social Security, respectively. To help connect these anniversaries to current threats to these critical programs, we have developed a program for use around the country.

As we continue to observe from the critical safety precautions, we may continue to celebrate the anniversaries over zoom. It may also be possible to hold events in person that follow CDC guidelines. This resource covers all possibilities.

However you choose to celebrate, be sure to [register your event using this form](#) or by emailing the details to Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org.

Virtual or In-Person Celebration

Schedule an anniversary with the Alliance using our video conferencing system. Alliance staff is available to administer the video conference and train speakers on the technology prior to the event. Invite elected officials to join. Set a speaker's agenda and encourage participants to supply their own cake and or use the mug-cake recipe included in this toolkit.

Recommended Agenda Anniversary Event

Welcome participants
Invited Speakers
Present Fact Sheets and Make Legislative Asks
Present Hero or Zero Awards, if applicable
Invite participants to tell their person stories
Enjoy anniversary cake

Mug Cake Recipe

This single-serving recipe is perfect for celebrating while staying safe. Add frosting, sprinkles, ice cream, or a candle to make it extra festive!

Ingredients

4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
4 tablespoons milk (or dairy-free milk)
1 1/2 tablespoons flavorless oil (sunflower, vegetable or coconut oil)
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions

In a microwavable mug whisk together the flour, sugar, and baking powder. Add in the milk, oil, and vanilla and mix until just combined. Microwave for roughly 45 seconds - 1 minute, or until firm to the touch.

Personal Storytelling is one of the most Powerful Tools for Change

It conveys why action is needed and inspires others to join us. Personal stories get the attention of the media and can convince elected officials to act.

Honing and sharing your story is your responsibility as an activist. Engaging and tracking the stories of others is your responsibility as an organizer.

Why Do We Need Prescription Drug Stories?

- We need to find people who are experiencing high or increasing drug prices. This puts a face to a contentious policy issue and makes the case that action should be taken NOW.
- Pharmaceutical corporations spend millions to convince Congress and policymakers that the status quo is fine. Stories of how high drug prices are hurting retirees is our best way to fight back.

How Can You Use Your Story?

- Share during congressional district and state capitol lobby visits
- Speaking at press conferences and fulfilling TV, print and digital media requests
- Speaking at membership meetings, rallies, protests and direct actions

Story Starters

- Are you or a family struggling to pay for prescription medications? Do you fear being able to pay for them in the future?
- Do you have diabetes, arthritis, or other conditions that require expensive medicines?
- Have you ever fallen into the Medicare prescription drug “donut hole?”
- What do you fear would happen to you or your family if Medicare were cut or you had to pay more for your coverage?
- Do you rely on Social Security to make ends meet? Could you have waited to collect Social Security until you were 70?
- Are there basic necessities you need but cannot afford?
- How would it affect your life if Social Security benefits were to increase by \$100 per month?
- Have you had to make adjustments in your living situation due to financial or health issues such as moving in with adult children or other relatives?
- How will you pay for long-term care if you or a relative needs it in the future?



Personal Storytelling Minikit 2021 Older Americans Month

Ok, I Have a Story to Tell, What's Next?

Write Your Story – it can be brief but you should try to answer the below questions.

Hi, I'm ____ (name) ____, from ____ (place) ____.

I was ____ (occupation) and retired in (year - if relevant).

It is hard for me to pay for the _____ (name of medicine_ my doctor has prescribed

It makes me feel ____ (insert emotion) ____ and I ____ (what am I doing to get buy).

If Congress fails to lower drug prices, _____ will happen to me.

Share your story with your state Alliance and the Alliance team in Washington.

- Practice telling your story with a friend or fellow Alliance member.
- Ask for their feedback.
- Plan to share your story at a membership meeting, rally, or action.

Ready to add your story to Alliance for Retired Americans advocacy

Engage the Alliance for Retired Americans by sending an email to mobilization@retiredamericans.org or add your story to the activist library by following [this link and completing this form](#).



Letters to the Editor

2021 Anniversary Events

Sample Letter to the Editor: Medicare #1

[Date]

Dear Editor:

July 30th marks the 56th anniversary of Medicare. It has improved the lives of millions of retirees like me. Before Medicare, only half of our nation's seniors had health insurance.

However, as great as Medicare is, we can do better. Medicare spends billions on prescription drugs for retirees. Yet, it cannot use its massive bargaining power to negotiate lower prices with pharmaceutical corporations. The Senate must pass The Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), allowing Medicare to negotiate with drug corporations, like the Veterans Administration and Medicaid do today, saving taxpayers \$450 billion over the next 10 years.

In 2020, Americans paid two to four times more for 20 brand-named drugs than people in Canada, France and Australia. Medicare negotiation would help bring American prices in-line with the global market.

We owe it to future generations to keep the Medicare program strong and healthy. Allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices on behalf of the American people would strengthen it and save the taxpayers billions.

Sincerely Yours,

[Name, Alliance position] [Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Medicare #2

[Date]

Dear Editor:

July 30th marks the 56th anniversary of Medicare, a program that has improved the lives of millions of retirees like me. Before Medicare, when uninsured seniors had serious health problems, they faced an impossible choice: risk financial ruin by seeking care or avoid treatment and watch their health deteriorate.

Thanks to Medicare, 54.3 million people across the country aged 65 and older now have health coverage. While having access is a start, we can and should do better for older Americans. The Senate must pass the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), which allows

the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate the price of 250 of the most expensive drugs, including insulin, for the Medicare system.

Negotiating lower prices would save taxpayers \$450 billion per year, according to the Congressional Budget Office. No person should have to choose between financial ruin and their health. Allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices will strengthen the program, while saving the taxpayers billions and reducing costs for America's seniors.

Sincerely Yours,

[Name, Alliance position] [Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Medicare #3

[Date]

Dear Editor:

July 30th marks the 56th anniversary of Medicare. Before Medicare, only half of our nation's seniors had health insurance, but now 54.3 million people across the country aged 65 and older have the coverage they need.

However, the system is not perfect. I, and many others, need the Senate to pass The Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), which allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services to negotiate the price of 250 of the most expensive drugs, including insulin, for the Medicare system. Negotiating lower prices would save taxpayers \$450 billion per year, according to the Congressional Budget Office, and save seniors from price gouging by big pharmaceutical corporations.

Americans earn Medicare benefits, contributing with every paycheck. Sens. [redacted] and [redacted] should be working to strengthen this system by passing important legislation like H.R. 3, not putting it at risk.

Sincerely Yours,

[Name, Alliance position] [Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #1

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Social Security is celebrating its 86th birthday on August 14th, and more than 62 million Americans – 1 out of every 4 households – rely on their hard earned Social Security benefits for economic security.

We recently learned that older Americans saw a rise in early retirements during the COVID pandemic, with an additional 1.7 million men and women retiring early. This increase disproportionately affected women, low-income Americans and those without a college

education. Unfortunately, these seniors will lose billions in earnings and as a result, will receive lower Social Security benefits in retirement.

Everyone should be able to rely on Social Security when they retire. Congress must pass legislation to strengthen the Social Security trust fund and increase our modest benefits.

My Rep. _____ and my Senators _____ and _____ need to enact legislation that expands Social Security for current and future retirees by requiring all Americans, including the super-rich, to pay their fair share into the Social Security system.

Sincerely yours,

[Your Name] [Your Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #2

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Social Security's 86th birthday is coming up on August 14th, and as a retired_____, I know how important it is to our community. It helps seniors, persons with disabilities, widows, and children who have lost a parent.

To improve the retirement security of older Americans, Congress must expand Social Security by providing an across-the-board increase for all current and future beneficiaries. Expanding benefits for everyone will give retirees a liveable wage and boost the economy, since retirees spend most of their benefits locally.

We must also institute the CPI-E, the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E), to calculate cost-of-living adjustments. The current measure used to calculate COLAs does not accurately measure the items seniors purchase -- seniors over 65 spend three times more on health care, including prescription drugs, than a young person, yet currently this is not factored into the formula.

If politicians tried to live on just the average Social Security benefit for a month, they would understand why we need to expand it.

Sincerely yours,

[Your Name] [Your Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #3

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Our Social Security System is celebrating its 86th birthday on August 14th. As a bedrock of our retirement security, it lifts more people out of poverty than any other program.

Yet Sen. Mitt Romney has again introduced legislation that takes aim at the Social Security and Medicare benefits we have earned over a lifetime. His bill, called the “TRUST Act,” paves the way to benefit cuts -- without even allowing the public to weigh in.

Sen. Romney wants to create special committees that will meet behind closed doors and send their recommendations to the Senate and House for a vote. It couldn’t even be amended by other senators or representatives.

Without Social Security, 22 million more Americans would be poor. Most people aged 65 and older receive the majority of their income from Social Security. In [state], this amount was only [insert dollar amount from the bottom of pg. 7 of your state’s [report](#)] in 2018.

Older Americans must tell their senators to vote against this dangerous and anti-democratic plan.

Sincerely yours,

[Your Name] [Your Address]

Request Lobby Visit

Contact the local district office, introduce yourself, who you are with and that you would like to request an in person or virtual lobby meeting with the member of Congress.

Report Lobby Visit and Hold Planning Meeting

Once your date is set, call a meeting of Alliance members who plan to participate in the visit. Review the talking points and fact sheets and assign speaking roles. Members of the national Alliance team are available to join this practice upon request. [Submit the details of the lobby visit using this tracker.](#)

Identify Yourself and the Group You Represent

Make sure the elected official or their staff knows who is in the room, and is clear about the Alliance's electoral power in the legislator's district.

Get the Meeting Started and Be Aware of the Time

Meetings usually are 45 minutes or less. Pay attention to the time. After introductions, say why you wanted to meet with the Member and what you hope to gain from the meeting.

State Your Position Clearly

Tell the elected official or their staff the key facts on your issue, being sensitive to what the particular legislator is interested in. Be clear and specific about what your position is on the issue.

Get the Elected Official to Take Action

Ask specific questions about where your elected official stands on your issue. Ask for a clear position on your issue and do not give up until you have an unmistakable 'yes' or 'no.' If the legislator is supporting you, ask for a specific action in support, such as holding a press conference with Alliance members.

Take Pictures!

Take a picture of your in person meeting or a screenshot of your virtual meeting to post on social media and send to the national Alliance.

Debrief and Follow Up

Talk with your group about how the meeting went, come to agreement on the minutes and how the legislator responded according to the Lobby Report Back Form. Designate a member of your group to [send the report using this form](#) and send pictures to Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org. Write letters thanking the legislator and their staff for their time and remind them of the commitments made to you during the meeting. Include any additional information they requested in the meeting.

Mark Anniversaries of Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security by Advocating to Strengthen Them for the Future

Lowering Prescription Drug Prices

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs and the costs are going up every year. Seniors are bearing the brunt of this, because they need more medicines to stay healthy.

Pharmaceutical corporations are raking in record profits, and they are spending millions to prevent Washington from taking action. 25% of seniors report not taking a drug prescribed by their doctor due to cost.

Require Medicare to Negotiate Prices of Most Expensive Drugs

Medicare's spending on prescription drugs increased by 26% between 2013 and 2018 due to higher drug prices, according to [a new report](#) from the [Medicare Advisory Payment Commission](#) (MedPAC).

Requiring Medicare to negotiate lower prices will save seniors and taxpayers \$500 billion. It is time for Congress to put patients and the American public ahead of pharmaceutical corporation profits.

Expand Medicare to Include Vision, Dental and Hearing

Savings from the lower drug prices Medicare negotiates should be used to strengthen and expand the Medicare program, including expanding benefits to ensure all beneficiaries receive the vision, dental and hearing services they need.

Rein in Anti-Competitive Pharmaceutical Industry Practices

Congress should also enact the Pandemic Treatment Access and Affordability Act (H.R. 597), sponsored by Representative Jan Schakowsky (IL), which would strengthen oversight of federal dollars used for vaccine research and development and prevent price gouging.

The federal government has spent tens of billions of taxpayer dollars on research and development (R&D) of vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, including \$23 billion for manufacturing and purchasing. Despite this public investment, there is no guarantee that these taxpayer-funded drugs will be affordable, accessible, or available to all who need them.



Lobby Day Talking Points **2021 Anniversary Summer Toolkit**

By prohibiting exclusive licensing and ending monopoly control, H.R. 597 ensures universal access to all taxpayer-funded drugs used to treat or prevent COVID-19 or any other diseases during public health emergencies and ensure their affordability.

Expand Social Security by Eliminating the Cap on Income Subject to Social Security Taxes

Urgent action is needed to strengthen retirement security by increasing Social Security benefits. The number of retirees who are dependent on Social Security for most or all of their income is increasing, in part, due to the decline of traditional pensions and will only grow in the wake of the pandemic recession.

It is time to expand Social Security by increasing benefits for all Americans and requiring all Americans to pay their fair share into the Social Security system.

The Alliance for Retired Americans Strongly Opposes the TRUST Act.

Senator Mitt Romney's bill creates "rescue committees" charged with making recommendations to change Social Security and Medicare. The rescue committee recommendations would be rushed to the House and Senate floor for a yes or no vote, which could not be amended by relevant committees or on the Senate or House floor.

The TRUST Act is based on a false premise that the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds are in crisis. In fact, Social Security can pay full benefits until 2035, and 79% of benefits after that. By raising or eliminating the cap, we can expand benefits and further extend the solvency of the program.

The Medicare Trust Fund is also solvent. It can be further strengthened by reining in the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs, which is the fastest growing portion of the program's budget. Allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices would dramatically strengthen the program.

The Alliance for Retired Americans Support Repeal of WEP and GPO

Today, more than 2.5 million retired public sector workers and certain spouses and survivors have been penalized receiving a reduction in their Social Security benefits. The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) impacts retired public employees with pensions and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) affects spouses and survivors with pensions who are entitled to their spouses' Social Security benefits. These individuals lose a portion or sometimes all the benefits they are entitled to. The Alliance for Retired Americans supports the Social Security Fairness Act, S. 1302 and H.R. 82, which will repeal the WEP and GPO, allowing those impacted to receive all the benefits they have earned



LOBBY REPORT BACK FORM 2021 Anniversary Summer

Representative's Name, State and District: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Representative or staff in visit: _____

Alliance Participants in Meeting: _____

CIRCLE RESPONSE FROM MEMBER OR STAFF

ISSUE	PRO-RETIREE POSITION	ANTI-RETIREE POSITION	UNDECIDED
Prescription Drug Prices	Supports lowering costs through negotiations, like the Veterans Administration	Opposes lowering the cost of life saving prescription drugs	Undecided
PTAA	Will become a co-sponsor of PTAA to ensure pandemic treatments are accessible and affordable	Opposes access to pandemic treatment	Undecided
Trust Act	Opposes Trust Act, which could allow a fast track of cuts to Social Security's earned benefit	Supports Trust Act and fast tracking reduced payments to Social Security beneficiaries	Undecided
Social Security	Supports expanding Social Security and full repeal of the WEP/GPO	Opposes expanding Social Security and repeal of WEP/GPO	Undecided
PRO Act	Supports strengthening retirement security by strengthening workers rights to organize	Opposes strengthening retirement security and workers rights to organize	Undecided

Follow-up commitments from the Representative's office: _____

Follow-up commitments from the Alliance participants: _____

Any follow-up needs from the national Alliance: _____

Please fill out and submit immediately using the online [Lobby Visit Report Back Form](#) or via email to Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org.