



## How to Structure Your Anniversary Event 2021

This year is the 56<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 86<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 86<sup>th</sup> birthday is coming up on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 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 86<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 14<sup>th</sup>. 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]