



ACTIVITY REPORT 2021

LEADERSHIP LETTER

OUR WORK THIS YEAR continued under the cloud of the coronavirus pandemic. Thankfully the COVID-19 vaccines and improvements in treatment have reduced the number of people dying from this disease, particularly older Americans. Nevertheless, more than 800,000 Americans have now lost their lives due to COVID-19, and this disease has caused the death of one out of every 100 seniors.

We were also saddened by the death of AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka in August. A champion for retirees and older Americans, he was intimately involved in our founding and our growth over two decades.

Despite these challenges, the grassroots members of the Alliance worked tirelessly in 2021 and helped pass laws that will strengthen retirement security for millions of older Americans.

President Biden's first major legislative achievements, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, delivered the resources the nation needed to fight the pandemic, secure pensions for millions, end the recession, invest in the nation's aging infrastructure and create good-paying jobs.

The AFL-CIO's Retirement Security Working Group and the Alliance were instrumental in saving multiemployer pensions from insolvency. Former President Trumka started the working group, coordinated by current AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, by bringing together dozens of international union presidents. The Alliance had a seat at the table and provided information and resources so that decision makers and their advisers could address our retirement security emergency. Ten million Americans will now receive the pensions they earned.

Our advocacy helped ensure that these sweeping packages would also help seniors, who have been the hardest hit by the pandemic, in other ways. That work made a difference. Seniors received \$1,400 stimulus payments; 85.8% of people over the age of 65 are fully vaccinated against COVID-19; 22 million seniors will gain access to the internet; and more Americans have access to affordable health care.

We also worked hard to lower prescription drug prices. The Alliance conducted national polling that showed that an 87% majority of voters over age 65 favor allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices, including 48% who are strongly in favor. Among Democratic seniors, 89% are in favor, as are 87% of Republican seniors and 81% of independent seniors.

The House-passed Build Back Better Act includes provisions to lower drug prices that the Alliance strongly supports. It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prices for some prescription drugs, caps the price of insulin at \$35 a month for all Americans, limits drug price increases to the rate of inflation, and caps out-of-pocket drug spending at \$2,000 per year for Medicare beneficiaries. The bill also expands Medicare's guaranteed benefits, providing coverage for all vaccines, and hearing care, including hearing aids.

The Build Back Better bill encountered stiff opposition at the end of the year, with the pharmaceutical industry spending tens of millions of dollars to weaken the bill or prevent the Senate from passing it. We are not deterred and will continue to fight so that no senior has to choose between putting food on the table or paying for their medicine.

None of this would be possible without your continued support. We are grateful for the opportunity to advocate for older Americans and look forward to continuing that work in the coming years.

In solidarity,



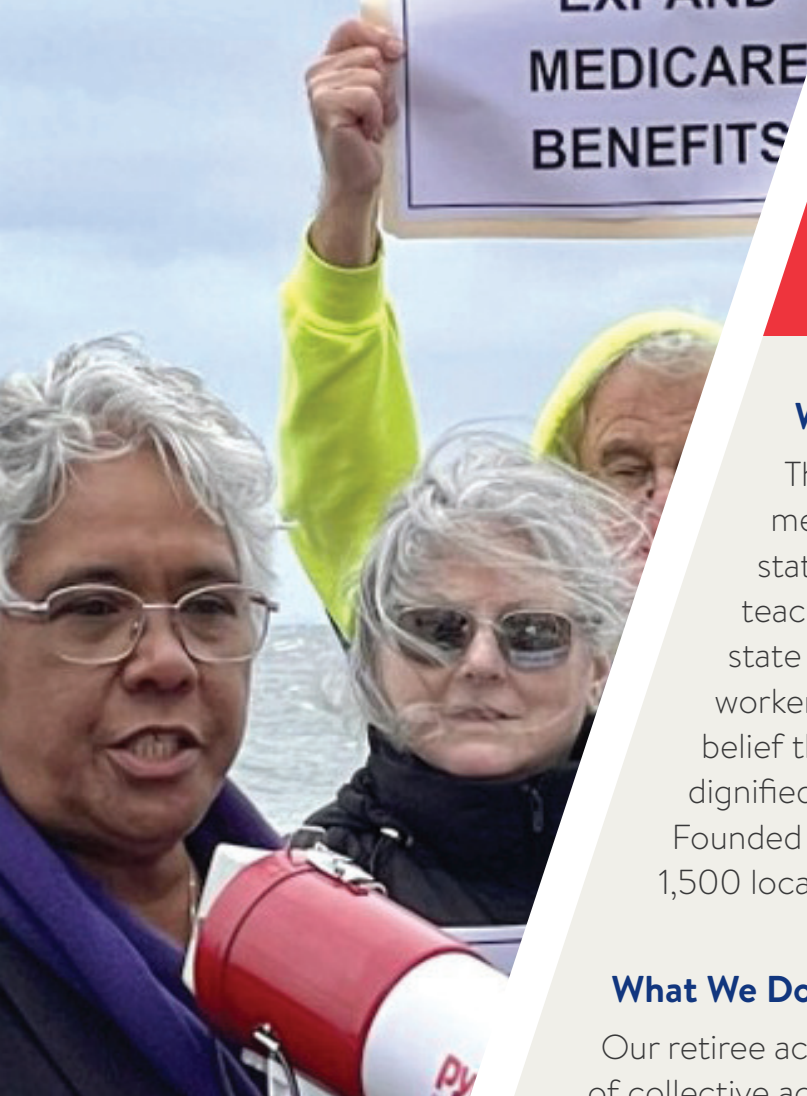
ROBERT ROACH, JR.
President



JOSEPH PETERS, JR.
Secretary-Treasurer



RICHARD FIESTA
Executive Director



ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

Who We Are

The Alliance for Retired Americans is 4.4 million members strong. Our retiree activists are in every state and are from all walks of life. We are former teachers, industrial workers, health care workers, state and federal government workers, construction workers and community leaders, all united in the belief that every American deserves a secure and dignified retirement after a lifetime of hard work. Founded by the AFL-CIO in 2001, the Alliance now has 1,500 local chapters and 39 state alliances.

What We Do

Our retiree activists understand the power of collective action to create change in their communities and the country. Often working in coalitions, Alliance members educate the public and policymakers about critical issues facing older Americans. We lobby elected officials, take direct action through creative demonstrations and protests, and organize online.

Where We Are

Members in every state
39 State Alliances
and growing



Lilieth Clacken, a home healthcare worker, with NYSARA member Marjorie Harrison (right), presses Rep. Kathleen Rice to vote for lower drug prices and Medicare expansion.

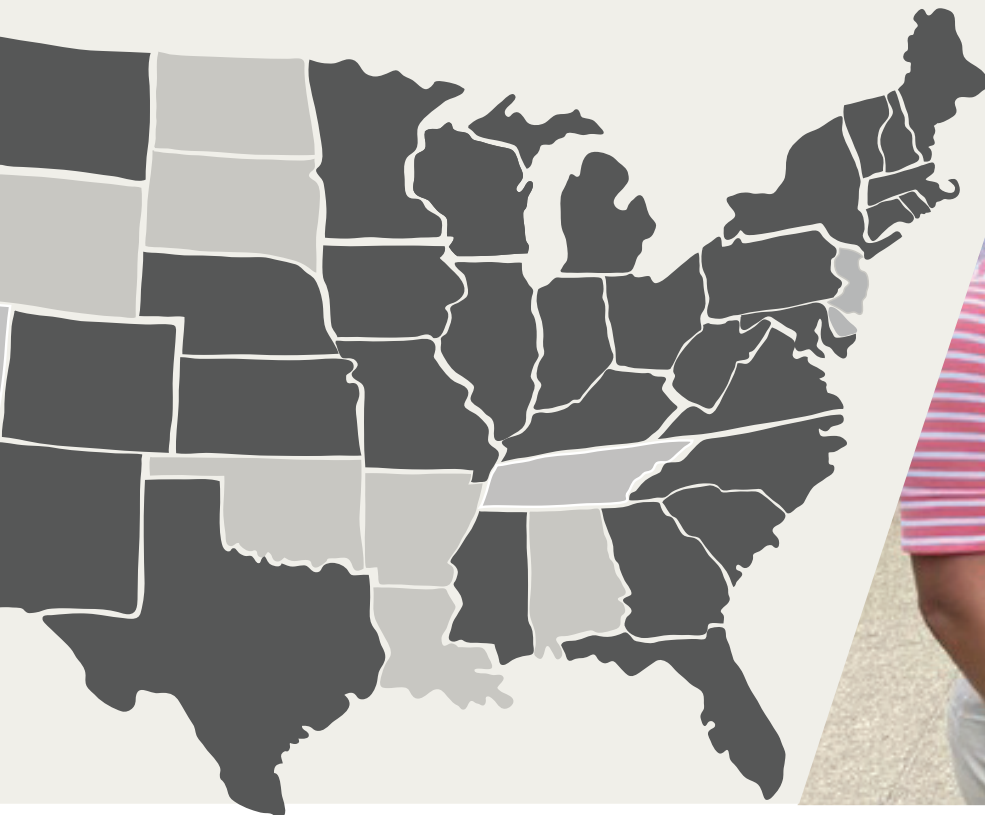
OUR PRIORITIES

Our Priorities

The Alliance for Retired Americans policy agenda is set during quadrennial meetings of its membership and our board. To protect and strengthen retirement security, our members are working to:

- ▴ Lower the cost of prescription drugs;
- ▴ Expand Social Security to increase benefits for current and future generations;
- ▴ Expand Medicare to cover essential medical services including hearing, vision and dental;
- ▴ Strengthen Medicaid and ensure all Americans have access to health care;
- ▴ Strengthen and protect earned pension benefits;
- ▴ Protect older Americans from financial fraud and abuse;
- ▴ Protect the right to vote; and
- ▴ Elect pro-retiree officials at all levels of government.

AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler stands with Maryland/DC Alliance President Susan Flashman at a voting rights rally.



**LOWER COST
BETTER**

ProtectOur

Arizona Alliance
President Sandra
Cole speaks during
a “Highway to Health”
Protect Our Care national
bus tour event.

ISSUE ADVOCACY

Fighting the Pandemic and the Coronavirus Recession

The \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act provided direct financial support to Americans, including seniors, and invested billions to expand COVID-19 testing and ensure the COVID-19 vaccine reached the American public quickly. Older Americans were among the first groups eligible to receive the vaccine. As of December, more than 90% of Americans over the age of 65 have been vaccinated against the deadly virus.

Saving Troubled Multiemployer Pensions from Insolvency

The American Rescue Plan also provided \$94 billion to prevent dozens of multiemployer pension plans from becoming insolvent, solving a crisis that put the pensions of 10 million Americans at risk.

The Alliance and the labor movement have worked for years to convince Congress to address this crisis and ensure that the 10 million Americans whose pensions are in these plans get the benefits that they have earned.

As a result of this legislation, not only will these workers and retirees have a more secure retirement, but the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation will be able to meet its obligations for the next 30 years.

Expanding Internet Access and Strengthening Public Transit

In November, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to rebuild the country’s roads, bridges, trains, and electricity grid while creating good paying jobs.

It also includes \$65 billion to bring broadband access to every American, including the 22 million seniors who do not have internet access at home, and \$39 billion to improve and expand public transportation.

Fighting for Lower Drug Prices

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, and seniors bear the brunt of it.

For two decades, the Alliance has advocated for allowing Medicare to have the power to negotiate lower drug prices. The House of Representatives passed a bill to do this in 2019, but it died in the Republican-controlled Senate.

President Biden's inauguration provided an opportunity to lower the prices seniors pay at the pharmacy counter by ending the pharmaceutical industry's monopoly power to set prices.

POLLING AMERICAN SENIORS ON DRUG PRICES

In June, the Alliance commissioned Lake Research Partners to conduct a national poll of voters over the age of 65 to gauge concerns over drug prices and support for allowing Medicare to negotiate prices directly with pharmaceutical corporations.

An 87% majority of voters over age 65 favored allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices, including 48% who were strongly in favor. Among Democratic seniors, 89% were in favor, as are 87% of Republican seniors and 81% of independent seniors. Voters over the age of 65 in rural areas (84%) favored the proposal with strong intensity as well.

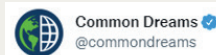
A majority of senior voters said they support using the savings from Medicare drug price negotiation to expand Medicare coverage to include hearing, dental, and vision benefits. Fifty-six percent of poll respondents said that savings from lower drug prices should be used to expand Medicare benefits, versus 15% who said it should be invested in public research into new treatments and cures and 9% who chose lowering Medicare's eligibility age to 60.

Across party lines, 86% of seniors had favorable views toward Medicare. However, just 46% say Medicare is doing an excellent or good job in dealing with prescription drug prices.

FIGHTING FOR BUILD BACK BETTER

President Biden's plan to lower drug prices was presented to Congress as part of his sweeping Build Back Better Plan to expand health care, create jobs, and address the effects of climate change, paid for by requiring wealthy corporations and individuals to pay their fair share in taxes.

Alliance members tirelessly made the case for allowing Medicare to negotiate lower prices throughout the year. Through phone calls, emails, news conferences, letters to the editor and demonstrations they showed what was at stake, and why older Americans need relief from high prices at pharmacy counters.



"This poll confirms that high drug prices are a top-of-mind issue for seniors when making voting decisions," said @ActiveRetirees.



commondreams.org

Seniors Would Cross Party Lines to Back Candidates Who Support Medicare N...
"This poll confirms that high drug prices are a top-of-mind issue for seniors when making voting decisions."



Happy to join @ActiveRetirees to discuss my support #HR3 #LowerDrugCostsNow Act!

Jordan 🌈🌻🌿 @ItsMrsKanterToU · May 17

youtube.com/watch?v=f8IHr8...

Thanks @RepDarrenSoto and @MargaridaJorg17 for joining us this morning!!!
@peopleb4pharma #LowerDrugPricesNow #BigPharma #TaxDay2021



Rep. John Larson (CT, at podium) introduces the Secure 2100 Act flanked by, from left, Reps. Linda Sanchez (CA), Brian Higgins (NY), and Richard Neal (MA).

In November, after months of negotiation among Democrats in both houses of Congress, the House passed the Build Back Better Act, H.R. 5376. It allows Medicare to negotiate lower prices for some medicines; caps insulin prices at \$35-per-month; caps out-of-pocket prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries at \$2,000 per year and limits drug price increases to the rate of inflation.

The bill also expands Medicare guaranteed benefits to include coverage for new hearing aids every five years, and will allow more Americans to receive care at home, rather than in an institution.

The Senate has yet to vote on the legislation, which the pharmaceutical industry and its corporate allies are spending millions to defeat.

New Leadership at the Social Security Administration

Alliance members cheered when President Biden fired Andrew Saul as the Social Security Administrator in July. Saul fought for policies that would have made it more difficult for people with disabilities to claim benefits, demoralized Social Security's workforce, and slowed the delivery of stimulus payments to beneficiaries.

Interviewed by [cnbc.com](https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/29/politics/saul-social-security/index.html), Alliance Executive Director Richard Fiesta said "Andrew Saul was a disaster for seniors and all Social Security beneficiaries. From day one, he was on a mission to gut the Social Security system from the inside."

Expanding Social Security

In October, Alliance President Robert Roach, Jr. joined Representative John Larson (CT) and dozens of lawmakers as he introduced the Social Security 2100: A Sacred Trust Act, H.R. 5723.

Rep. Larson's bill expands and strengthens Social Security. It increases benefits for all beneficiaries by requiring wealthy Americans to pay Social Security payroll tax on wages above \$400,000. It also ensures that annual cost-of-living increases are calculated based on the CPI-E, which takes into account the items retirees spend their money on, including prescription drugs. It will also restore earned Social Security benefits to nearly two million public sector retirees by repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset.

The House Subcommittee on Social Security held a hearing on the legislation in December. President Roach and Connecticut Alliance President Bette Marafino testified in favor of the bill and urged the committee to act on it quickly.

Congressional Voting Record and Retiree Hero Awards

Our annual Congressional Voting Record was released in February. Forty-seven members of the Senate and 214 members of the House of Representatives earned the distinction of “Retiree Hero” with perfect scores of 100 percent. Thirty-seven Senators earned scores of 20% or below while eighty-six House members earned a score of 0%.

The 2021 report reviewed ten key Senate and House votes including bills and amendments to provide funds to improve health and safety in nursing homes; 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.

PRO Act and Strike Support

As tens of thousands of American workers voted to authorize more than 250 strikes in 2021, the House of Representatives passed the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, H.R. 842, which removes barriers that keep workers from forming a union and bargaining for better wages, benefits and safer workplaces.

Our members enthusiastically joined dozens of PRO Act events and asked their members of Congress and Senators to vote for H.R. 2 during their lobby meetings, making sure they know that workers who form or join a union have greater retirement security. Union workers earn more and can negotiate for benefits such as health care, pensions and employer contributions to retirement plans, which leads to higher income and increased Social Security benefits in retirement. Further, unions often come with negotiated defined benefit pensions, which provide lifelong retirement income.

Alliance activists also stood in solidarity with striking UAW and BCTGM members, walking picket lines, donating to strike funds, and organizing a diaper supply drive for the children of striking workers.

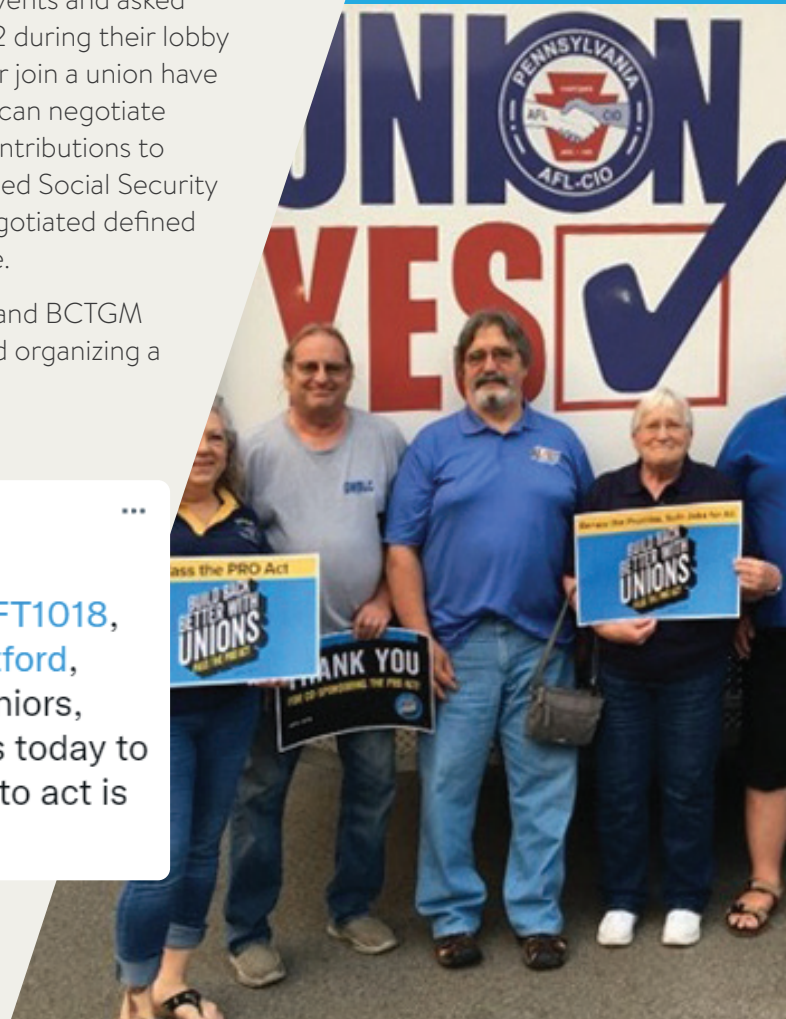
ABOVE: Nebraska Alliance President Al Mumm joins the BCTGM workers' picket line at the Omaha Kellogg's plant.

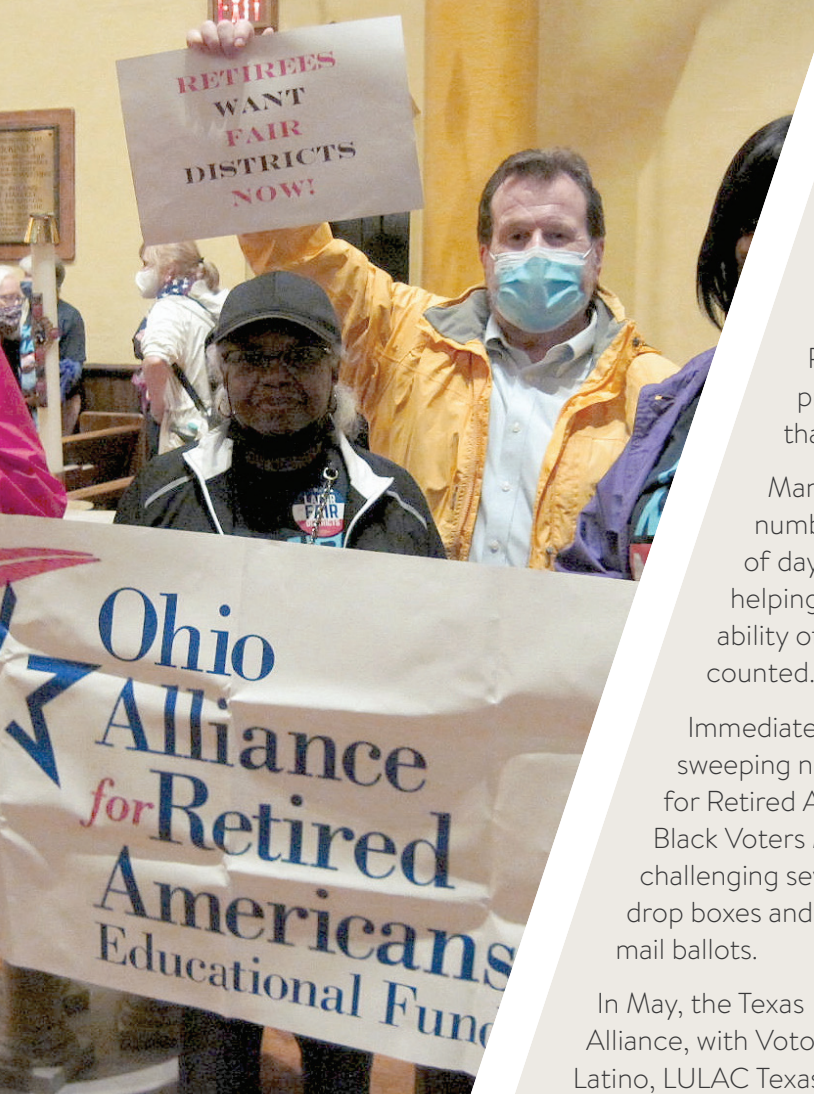
BELOW: Pennsylvania Alliance members, including state President Jody Weinreich (right), rally in support of the PRO Act.



Rep. John Larson
@RepJohnLarson

Thank you to @ConnAFLCIO, @ceanews, @HFT1018, @CSEA_CT, CT @ActiveRetirees, @YWCAHartford, CWEALF, and the Commission on Women, Seniors, Children, Equity and Opportunity for joining us today to support #Secure2100. The time for Congress to act is now!





Ohio Alliance members protest gerrymandering during Fair Maps Day at the state capitol.

Fighting for Voting Rights

Reacting to high levels of voter turnout in the 2020 presidential election, 19 state legislatures enacted 33 laws that will make it harder for Americans to vote this year.

Many of these laws restrict voting by mail, reduce the number of drop boxes for mail ballots, shorten the number of days to vote, and place more legal restrictions on people helping others to vote. All of these are likely to affect the ability of older and minority voters to cast a ballot that will be counted.

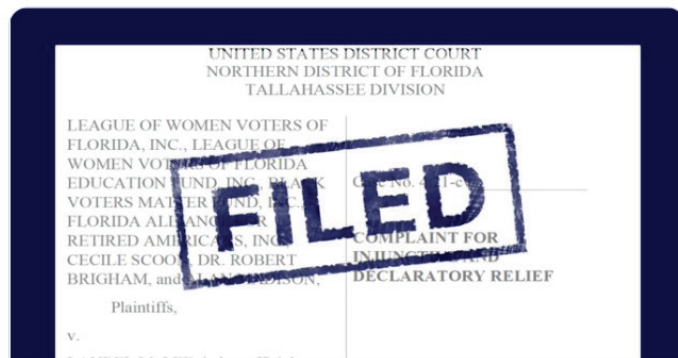
Immediately after Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed a sweeping new voter suppression bill into law, the Florida Alliance for Retired Americans, the League of Women Voters of Florida, the Black Voters Matter Fund, and several Florida voters filed a lawsuit challenging several provisions of the law which places restrictions on drop boxes and effectively bans volunteers helping voters return their mail ballots.

In May, the Texas Alliance, with Voto Latino, LULAC Texas, and Texas AFT, filed a lawsuit against Texas' new restrictive voting law. The Texas law will place undue burdens on the ability of seniors to vote by limiting early voting hours, reducing local options for casting ballots such as drop boxes, placing restrictions on mail-in voting, and giving partisan poll watchers unprecedented access to polling places.

Democracy Docket @DemocracyDocket

☀️ Over in Florida, 4 lawsuits are challenging #SB90.

In the first lawsuit, @LWVFlorida, @BlackVotersMtr, @LULAC and @ActiveRetirees claim that the restrictions on drop boxes, mail voting, line warming and more in #SB90 violate the 1st and 14th Amendments.



democracydocket.com

New Filing in League of Women Voters of Florida v. Lee

Read the latest filing in League of Women Voters of Florida v. Lee.

Adam Bennett @AdamBennettKHOU

Replying to @KHOU and @BrandiKHOU

🌟📢 BREAKING: @LULAC Texas, @votolatino, Texas @ActiveRetirees and @TexasAFT sue to block #SB1, the election bill that @GovAbbott just signed into law. @KHOU #txlege

IN THE MEDIA

The Alliance is a go-to source for national and local media outlets. In 2021 we were mentioned or quoted in more than 250 articles on retiree issues, including prescription drug prices, Medicare expansion, protecting voting rights, and Social Security.



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PUBLIC MEDIA

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815 16th Street NW, 4th Floor
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COVER PHOTO: *Texas Alliance
members rally for voting
rights in June.*