



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Seniors Praise Nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson to U.S. Supreme Court

President **Biden** [selected](#) D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge **Ketanji Brown Jackson** on Friday as his nominee to succeed retiring Justice **Stephen Breyer** for the nation's highest court.

"Judge Jackson is exceptionally qualified to serve on the Supreme Court," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "We have every confidence that she will safeguard the civil rights of all Americans, including protecting older workers from discrimination and defending the right of every worker to join a union. We call on the Senate to confirm her quickly."

Jackson's resume includes an extensive background in criminal defense and public interest law. President Biden elevated her in 2021 from the trial court bench to the appeals court, which is regarded as second in power only to the Supreme Court. The selection is also historic, since no other Black woman has ever been nominated for the U.S. Supreme Court.

Senators Again Eye "Fixes" to Social Security

If Republicans take one or both chambers of Congress in November, it is possible that attempts to "fix Social Security's finances" will again become an area of bipartisan focus.

Senators **Mitt Romney** (UT), **Bill Cassidy** (LA), **Richard Durbin** (IL), **Joe Manchin** (WV) and **Angus King** (ME) are among those currently [discussing the revival of efforts](#), similar to previous talks, about "grand bargains" that would reduce deficits and debt. One example of that effort was the Simpson-Bowles fiscal commission in 2010, which ultimately did not achieve its goals of trimming Social Security benefits while gradually increasing the retirement age.

Last April, Sen. Romney and Rep. **Mike Gallagher** (WI) [introduced](#) the "Time to Rescue United States' Trusts" (TRUST) Act as stand alone bills in the U.S. Senate and House (S.1295 and H.R. 2575). That legislation paves the way for cuts to Social Security and Medicare by establishing so-called "Rescue Committees" charged with recommending changes to the Social Security, Medicare and Highway Trust Funds in the name of "long-term solvency."

The Rescue Committees in that legislation are not required to conduct any public hearings; their recommendations could not be amended by the full House or Senate; and the recommendations must receive an up or down vote on the House and Senate floor. There are no limits to what could be recommended, including benefit cuts, changes to the eligibility age, means testing of benefits, or higher taxes on working Americans.

“These plans were dangerous when they first arose, and many are still a threat to retirement security,” said **President Roach**. “Seniors can’t afford to lose any of their Social Security benefits when they already face high costs for things like prescription drugs, dental work and skilled nursing care. We should be expanding Social Security, not cutting it.”

Alliance Celebrates Scrap the Cap Day

Millionaires across the country stopped paying their Social Security taxes for the remainder of the year this week. Most American workers, however, will continue to contribute to Social Security all year long. That is why the Alliance joined in celebrating Thursday, February 24 as “Scrap the Cap Day.”

To help commemorate the occasion, the Center for Economic and Policy Research provided a [calculator](#) that shows the last day that certain millionaires paid into Social Security for the year. For example, Abbvie CEO **Richard Gonzalez’s** \$1.7 million salary means that he stopped contributing around February 2nd.



The current ‘cap’ on [maximum earnings subject to the Social Security tax](#) stands at \$147,000. This means workers pay 6.2% of their salary only until they reach \$147,000 in earnings for the year.

Several lawmakers have proposed legislation that would remove the tax cap, allowing more income to be paid into the fund. Rep. **John Larson’s** (CT) [Social Security 2100 Act](#) does that and also expands benefits across the board, with greater increases for the lowest-income and oldest beneficiaries. Rep. Larson’s bill honors President Biden’s pledge not to raise taxes on anyone making less than \$400,000 per year.

“With the additional funds that would become available by removing the cap, we can expand Social Security and extend the solvency of the Trust Fund well into the future,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

Daily Activities Like Gardening Reduced Heart Disease Risk in Older Women

Running and brisk walking are not the only ways to reduce the risk of heart disease. Simply being "up and about" and performing routine activities, referred to as "daily life movement," including housework, gardening, cooking and self-care activities like showering, can significantly benefit cardiovascular health.



[*Science Daily*](#) reported this week on a study at the Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Science at University of California San Diego. Researchers compared women who had less than two hours per day of daily life movement with women who had at least four hours of movement. Those who moved more had a 43% lower risk of cardiovascular disease, 43% lower risk of coronary heart disease, 30% lower risk of stroke, and a 62% lower risk of cardiovascular disease death.

"Even simple household chores like doing the dishes led to much better health," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "The women studied did not need to perform strenuous exercise to show significant results."

Kaiser Health News: As Covid Slogs On, Seniors Find Fortitude Waning and Malaise Growing

By Judith Graham

Late one night in January, **Jonathan Coffino**, 78, turned to his wife as they sat in bed. "I don't know how much longer I can do this," he said, glumly.

Coffino was referring to the caution that's come to define his life during the covid-19 pandemic. After two years of mostly staying at home and avoiding people, his patience is frayed and his distress is growing.

"There's a terrible fear that I'll never get back my normal life," Coffino told me, describing feelings he tries to keep at bay. "And there's an awful sense of purposelessness."

Despite recent signals that covid's grip on the country may be easing, many older adults are struggling with persistent malaise, heightened by the spread of the highly contagious omicron variant. Even those who adapted well initially are saying their fortitude is waning or wearing thin.

[Read more here.](#)

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.