



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Federal Judge Finds Florida Voting Law Unconstitutional in Case Brought by the Florida Alliance and Others



A federal judge [struck down](#) Florida's restrictive voting law, S.B. 90, on Thursday, finding the bill that passed in 2021 to be racially discriminatory.

"Older Floridians take voting seriously and we are grateful that the Court today struck down S.B. 90," said **Bill Sauers**, President of the Florida Alliance. "The Court agreed that this law not only made it more difficult for millions of Florida citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote but that it was intended to prevent millions of Floridians' voices from being heard at the polls."

The Florida Alliance filed a lawsuit on the day the bill was signed into law specifically challenging provisions that would make it harder for older and minority Floridians to vote, including:

- Imposing restrictions on drop boxes voters use to return mail ballots;
- Effectively banning organizations and volunteers from helping voters return their mail ballots;
- Requiring voters to request mail ballots more frequently; and
- Banning any non-poll worker from giving food or drink, including water, to voters waiting in line to vote.

"The Alliance is fighting to make sure every one of our 4.4 million members nationwide, and all older Americans, can exercise their fundamental constitutional right to vote," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Today's decision shows that voter suppression will not go unchecked."

## Alliance Praises House Passage of Legislation to Reduce the Price of Insulin

The United States House of Representatives [passed](#) the Affordable Insulin Now Act, [H.R. 6833](#), by a vote of [232-193](#) yesterday, capping the cost of insulin at \$35 per month for all Medicare beneficiaries and many other Americans of all ages who need the drug to manage their diabetes.

“We applaud the House of Representatives for passing this important legislation, which will provide real relief for millions of patients whose health depends on insulin, if the Senate acts,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

“Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs, and this is especially true with insulin. Insulin costs [seven times more here than](#) it does in other countries,” he continued.

According to the American Diabetes Association, nearly 1 in 3 people over the age of 65 have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes.

“Retirees welcome all proposals that bring relief to people facing skyrocketing prescription drug costs but capping insulin prices is not enough,” added Executive Director **Fiesta**. “We still need to allow Medicare to require drug corporations to negotiate lower prices and provide relief to seniors at the pharmacy counter. The 4.4 million members of the Alliance urge the members of the United States Senate to follow suit and pass similar legislation.”



Proposals to lower what people pay out-of-pocket for drugs tops the public’s list of health care priorities for Congress, a new [KFF Health Tracking Poll](#) finds. A majority of the public (61%) say limiting how much drug companies can increase the price of prescription drugs each year to not surpass the rate of inflation should be a “top priority” for Congress.

## President Biden’s 2023 Budget Offers Benefits, Protections for Older Americans

President **Joe Biden** unveiled his proposed budget for the 2023 fiscal year this week, calling for \$5.8 trillion dollars in spending on a number of federal programs. Along with funding for national defense and action to combat climate change, the budget proposal also bolsters several programs that directly support older Americans.

The [Social Security Administration](#) (SSA) would receive a 14% increase in spending from 2021 under the proposal, to a total of \$14.8 billion overall. Much of that spending would go to improve services by increasing staffing levels for SSA field offices. The agency administers retirement, disability and survivor benefits to nearly 70 million Americans, but had to cease in-person operations at the height of the pandemic.

The President’s budget also requests a 9.6% increase in spending for the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH), which is responsible for conducting biomedical and public health research. Much of that increase is slated for the NIH’s Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, which executes high-risk, cutting edge research.

The country’s [election infrastructure](#) was tagged for a massive boost in spending as well. The President requested \$10 billion to support state and local election officials, expand the Postal

Service's ability to administer vote-by-mail and protect marginalized communities from voter suppression. New restrictive voting legislation has already hampered older Americans' ability to vote. In Texas, [older Black voters](#) have seen their mail-in ballots rejected at an alarming rate.

"We're pleased to see that the President's budget takes the needs of older Americans into account," said President **Roach**. "Now it's up to Congress to make these changes a reality."

## **FDA, CDC Clear Second COVID-19 Boosters for Americans Age 50 and Older**

This week, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authorized [additional doses](#) of the COVID-19 booster shot for adults over the age of 50. Following the decision, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) updated its [booster recommendations](#) to include this newly eligible group. The FDA also updated its authorization of additional doses for people 12 and older who are immunocompromised.

FDA and CDC officials said that those who are eligible should wait at least four months after their initial booster before receiving a second dose, as the immunity to COVID-19 has been [shown to decline](#) over the course of several months.

"It's the same as flu vaccination," said **Dr. Jorge Salinas**, an infectious disease specialist at Stanford University. "We get vaccinated once a year, and we open it pretty early. But some people have shown that if you do it too early, you can lose a bit of the protection towards the tail end of the flu season."

Officials stated that additional booster doses may be recommended to broader swaths of Americans later in the year. For those currently eligible for the second booster, pharmacies and doctors offices are expected to become the primary sites where people can receive their vaccinations.

"Once again, we're recognizing the importance of following the advice of the CDC," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "These second doses provide added protection from a pandemic that has inflicted an awfully heavy toll on older Americans."

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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.