



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Senate Democrats Continue to Eye July Deadline to Pass Lower Drug Price Bill

After long negotiations, Senate Democrats have pushed forward a plan that will allow Medicare to negotiate lower prescription drug prices, moving to revive President **Biden's** economic program to rein in the soaring cost.

As talks between Sen. Majority Leader **Chuck Schumer** (NY) and **Sen. Joe Manchin** (WV) [continue](#), language sent to the Senate Parliamentarian Wednesday continues to include mandating that the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) negotiate prices beginning in 2023; limiting Medicare premium increases; capping out-of-pocket costs for Medicare patients at \$2,000 per year; and making more vaccines free to Medicare patients.

All future Secretaries of HHS must also continue to negotiate on Medicare drug prices. Other possible provisions are still being negotiated, including tax reform and proposals to address climate change and energy.

Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (KY) threatened to stand in the way of critical, unrelated bipartisan legislation that addresses a national semiconductor shortage so long as Democrats continue movement on their package that includes drug price limits. However, the likelihood of that threat remaining an impediment appears to have [diminished](#).

“We may be inching ever closer to critical legislation to lower drug prices, but we must keep up our activism and let Congress know we need help now,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “We know that Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and the drug industry will do anything they can to block progress.”

“There is no more urgent issue facing retirees,” Fiesta continued. “Americans continue to pay the highest prices in the world for their medications every day that we do not reach the finish line. It’s time for Congress to finally deliver for seniors and not drug corporations.”

## Alliance Calls for Change in Wake of Mass Shooting at Fourth of July Parade in Illinois

Seven people were tragically killed and dozens more were wounded in a [shooting](#) during a Fourth of July parade in Highland Park, Illinois on Monday.

Police say twenty-one year old **Robert Crimo III** used an AR-15-type rifle in the attack. He had legally obtained multiple guns between 2020 and 2021, passing four background checks in spite

of a prior suicide threat that led to the confiscation of several knives and a sword from his home in 2019. He had no criminal history but was known to post violent imagery online.

Crimo drove to Madison, Wisconsin immediately following the shooting in Highland Park and reportedly considered attacking another celebration. There were also numerous other shootings throughout the country over the holiday weekend, including the [wounding of two Philadelphia police officers](#) during the July 4 fireworks in their city.

“Acts of once unimaginable violence are becoming commonplace in our country,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “The members of the Alliance join with all those who were devastated by this horrific crime in calling for an end to gun violence.”

“President Biden recently signed legislation to help address this urgent problem. But we can’t stop there. We must build on that by also stopping the proliferation of assault weapons.”

### **Florida Alliance Denounces Sen. Marco Rubio’s Plan to Cut Social Security**

In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, Sen. **Marco Rubio** (FL) unveiled his “New Parents Act”, a plan that many advocates for seniors were quick to criticize.



Sen. Rubio

[Sen. Rubio’s plan](#) offers paid parental leave but forces parents to take money out of their future Social Security earnings, either delaying retirement or seeing cuts in Social Security benefits for up to five years.

Florida Alliance (FLARA) President **Bill Sauers** called Sen. Rubio’s plan “uncaring, heartless, and unnecessary,” condemning its disruption of Social Security benefits.

**Janice Poirier**, regional vice president for FLARA and president of the Florida

Education Association’s retired chapter, stated, “Rubio’s plan forces parents to pay for family leave with their own Social Security benefits. That’s not a pro-family agenda, that’s a scam.”

Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** echoed their sentiments. “This is yet another thinly-veiled attempt to undermine Social Security,” he said. “We will not allow these attacks against the programs that our seniors depend on to gain traction in Congress.”

### **Register now for the Alliance’s 2022 National Membership Meeting**

Members of the Alliance for Retired Americans will hold their quadrennial National Meeting virtually on July 27-28 from 1 to 5 PM Eastern Time. National leaders in the fight to strengthen and expand retirement security will address the meeting, and officers will be elected.

The National Meeting will also consider new Alliance resolutions which guide the Alliance's policy positions, and there will be interactive workshops to help prepare for the critical 2022 midterm elections.

Please [click here to register](#) for the meeting. The registration deadline is July 15, 2022.

### ***Kaiser Health News: How Pfizer Won the Pandemic, Reaping Outsize Profit and Influence*** **By Arthur Allen**

The grinding two-plus years of the pandemic have yielded outsize benefits for one company — Pfizer — making it both highly influential and hugely profitable as Covid-19 continues to infect tens of thousands of people and kill hundreds each day.



Its success in developing covid medicines has given the drugmaker unusual weight in determining U.S. health policy. Based on internal research, the company's executives have frequently announced the next stage in the fight against the pandemic before government officials have had time to study the issue, annoying many experts in the medical field and leaving some patients unsure whom to trust.

Pfizer's 2021 revenue was \$81.3 billion, roughly double its revenue in 2020, when its top sellers were a pneumonia vaccine, the cancer drug Ibrance, and the fibromyalgia treatment Lyrica, which had gone off-patent.

Now its mRNA vaccine holds 70% of the U.S. and European markets. And its antiviral Paxlovid is the pill of choice to treat early symptoms of covid. This year, the company expects to rake in more than \$50 billion in global revenue from the two medications alone.

Read more [here](#).