



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Seniors Applaud House Passage of Bold Action to Lower Drug Prices

Alliance members celebrated passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in the U.S. House of Representatives today, five days after the bill was passed by the U.S. Senate. President **Biden** has said he will sign the bill.

The bill will help lower prescription drug prices for seniors by:

- Requiring Medicare to negotiate lower prices for some of the highest priced prescription drugs, using its enormous purchasing power on behalf of seniors and taxpayers;
- Capping out of pocket costs for insulin at \$35 per month for Medicare beneficiaries;
- Making all recommended adult vaccines free for Medicare beneficiaries beginning in 2023;
- Prohibiting drug corporations from increasing the price it charges Medicare for a drug by more than the rate of inflation; and
- Capping out of pocket drug spending at \$2,000 per year for Medicare Part D.

“I have witnessed seniors at the supermarket, having to leave food at the cash register so they could make ends meet,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “This legislation is a game-changer that will go a long way to help ensure retirees are not put in that terrible position.”



“I have been paying up to \$480 per month for my insulin,” said Maryland/DC Alliance member **Pam Parker** of Bethesda, Maryland, who needs the drug to treat her diabetes. Ms. Parker previously shared her challenges paying for her medicines at a Capitol Hill news conference. “Capping my insulin cost at \$35 per month and my overall annual out-of-pocket drug

Pam Parker (at podium) speaking with Senators (left to right) Debbie Stabenow (MI), Ron Wyden (OR) and Jeanne Shaheen (NH) at the U.S. Capitol on June 26, 2019.

spending at \$2,000 will allow me to breathe a huge sigh of relief and eliminate a major source of anxiety for millions of seniors.”

Americans pay the highest drug prices in the world, and one in four Americans has reported not taking at least one drug as prescribed because they couldn’t afford it.

“The Alliance has been fighting to give Medicare the right to negotiate lower prices for more than two decades,” added **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “The action taken by Congress today sends a strong message to seniors that lower drug prices are closer than ever.

“Now that the House, the Senate and Vice President **Kamala Harris** have voted, our members look forward to President Biden quickly making this legislation the law of the land,” said Fiesta. “When he does, we will finally be putting seniors ahead of pharmaceutical corporations to deliver lower drug prices for the American people.”

[Click here to see the Alliance fact sheet with additional details about the IRA.](#)

Social Security’s Anniversary is This Sunday

Sunday marks the 87th anniversary of Social Security. In August of 1935, President **Franklin D. Roosevelt** signed the Social Security Act into law, codifying access to lifesaving resources that impact over 70 million people every year. The program provides beneficiaries a lifeline that empowers them to live a life of dignity, and Alliance members in Florida, Wisconsin and other states are holding events to both celebrate the program and remind all Americans of its importance. The anniversary celebrations come amid rising threats to the system by Republican elected officials and candidates.

“Social Security is a remarkable success story, and we must expand it to ensure that the needs of beneficiaries continue to be met,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Congress has not enhanced this program in 50 years. It is time.”

Several bills have been introduced that would give seniors the tools they need in order to not only survive but thrive. An Alliance fact sheet provides an overview of the expansion bills [here](#).

The Social Security 2100 Act, H.R. 5723 and S. 3071, introduced by Rep. **John Larson** (CT) and Sen. **Richard Blumenthal** (CT), is one of those bills. It would provide an across the board increase in benefits of \$200 per month, end the 5-month waiting period to receive disability benefits, provide caregiver credits, and improve the Cost-of-Living Adjustment.

The Social Security Expansion Act, S. 4365 and H.R. 8005, introduced by Sen. **Bernie Sanders** (VT) and Rep. **Peter DeFazio** (OR), also expands Social Security and increases benefits by requiring that wealthy Americans pay their fair share.

A growing number of Republican candidates and elected officials are calling for dramatic changes to the earned benefits program such as requiring it to be re-approved every year, sunseting it in five years, privatizing the system, and reducing benefits.

“As we celebrate Social Security’s anniversary we redouble our efforts and make sure voters understand that the benefits they have earned are on the ballot,” said Executive Director Fiesta.

Richard Fiesta Addresses SOAR Retirees

Fiesta traveled to Las Vegas to address the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) Conference last Friday. During his presentation he discussed the senior vote in the 2022 midterm elections, the Alliance's Medicare and Social Security anniversary activities, and the Inflation Reduction Act.

He also spoke about the many pro-retiree actions taken by Congress and the Biden Administration including the Inflation Reduction Act, which will allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices and cap insulin at \$35 per month for Medicare beneficiaries; as well as the American Rescue Plan, which provided \$94 billion for 3 million Americans in troubled multi-employer pension plans; and he elaborated on benefits for seniors under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Kaiser Health News: Nursing Homes Are Suing the Friends and Family of Residents to Collect Debts

By Noam N. Levey

ROCHESTER, N.Y. — Lucille Brooks was stunned when she picked up the phone before Christmas two years ago and learned a nursing home was suing her.



"I thought this was crazy," recalled Brooks, 74, a retiree who lives with her husband in a modest home in the Rochester suburbs. Brooks' brother had been a resident of the nursing home. But she had no control over his money or authority to make decisions for him. She wondered how she could be on the hook for his nearly \$8,000 bill.

Brooks would learn she wasn't alone. Pursuing unpaid bills, nursing homes across this industrial city have been routinely suing not only

of people sued by federally licensed nursing homes in Monroe County from 2018 to 2021.
(HEATHER AINSWORTH FOR KHN)

Lucille Brooks of Pittsford, New York, is among hundreds

residents but their friends and family, a KHN review of court records reveals. The practice has ensnared scores of children, grandchildren, neighbors, and others, many with nearly no financial ties to residents or legal responsibility for their debts.

Read more [here](#).