



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Charlie Crist to Take on Ron DeSantis for Florida Governor after Winning Democratic Primary

Rep. **Charlie Crist** (D) cruised to a primary victory over state Agriculture Commissioner **Nikki Fried** in Florida on Tuesday and will face Gov. **Ron DeSantis** (R) in November in the important race for Florida governor.



“Charlie Crist has a proven record of fighting for seniors, both as Governor of Florida from 2007-2011 and as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives since 2017,” said **Bill Sauers**, President of FLARA. “We have also appreciated Rep. Crist’s leadership as a member of Congress. He’s fought to strengthen and expand Medicare, and expand Social Security while protecting the program from cuts or privatization efforts.”

Rep. Crist on Tuesday in St. Petersburg, Florida

Rep. Crist has earned a 96% lifetime score in the Alliance’s [2021 Congressional Voting Record](#) in the U.S. House.

DeSantis is [widely believed](#) to be strongly considering a bid for the White House in 2024.

In April a federal judge [struck down](#) Florida’s restrictive voting law, S.B. 90, finding the bill signed into law by DeSantis in 2021 to be racially discriminatory. The [Florida Alliance had filed a lawsuit](#) on the day the bill became law, specifically challenging provisions that would make it harder for older and minority Floridians to vote. S.B. 90 is currently [on hold](#) as the state’s appeal makes its way through the courts.

“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,” said Sauers in April.

The Florida Alliance's lawsuit specifically challenged provisions that:

- Impose restrictions on drop boxes voters use to return mail ballots;
- Effectively ban organizations and volunteers from helping voters return their mail ballots;

- Require voters to request mail ballots more frequently; and
- Ban any non-poll worker from giving food or drink, including water, to voters waiting in line to vote.

FDA's Announcement on Hearing Aids Could Save Relationships

About [1 in 3 Americans between the ages of 65 and 74](#) has hearing loss, and the [FDA's move](#) last week to make hearing aids available over-the-counter (OTC) is a step forward in giving seniors access to care they need. The FDA ruled that a new category of OTC hearing aids will become available for purchase without a prescription or medical exam beginning in October.

The ruling came as part of President **Biden's** Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy and is expected to lead to some unanticipated benefits: because the hearing aids will allow many older Americans to more easily be a part of daily conversations, they are likely to save relationships and prevent isolation.



Helene Rosenthal is a board member of the Center for Hearing and Communications, which advises and advocates for people with hearing loss, and she knows the benefits of hearing aids firsthand. Speaking for many, she [describes](#) previously having to ask friends and family to repeat themselves — and in their frustration, their answering by enunciating each and every syllable “slowly, as if she were learning English for the first time.” Ms. Rosenthal also said that her hearing loss caused problems in her marriage until she realized she was able to address the situation.

“Over-the-counter hearing aids are likely to make a world of difference for the hearing-impaired, both socially and in their overall health,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Better hearing also leads to fewer falls and a decrease in other health risks.”

Using Covid Relief Funds to Rehire Retired Teachers Could Help Address Teacher Shortage

With school districts across the country facing [steep teacher shortages](#) — causing class sizes to swell and threatening to stagnate student achievement — some states are offering bonuses to prevent their most experienced teachers from retiring.

One solution involves states using funds appropriated by the American Rescue Plan (COVID-19 Stimulus Package), which Congress passed last year; that money can be used [to rehire retired teachers](#), Secretary of Education **Miguel Cardona** said during an appearance on “Face the Nation” last Sunday. He added that states must also make sure they support educators and improve their working conditions as part of an overall strategy to address the increased need.

The Des Moines, Iowa school system is even [offering](#) a \$50,000 retirement bonus for longtime educators if they stay one more year.

“Retired teachers have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in their field, so it is no wonder many are being asked to return,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “They should

accept the offers if that is their choice, or enjoy the retirement they have earned if that is their preference.”

Life Expectancy Fell during COVID Pandemic, Especially for Hispanic and Black Males

A study published Tuesday in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* (PNAS) has found that life expectancy in the U.S. fell by [4.5 and 3.6 years for Hispanic and Black males, respectively](#), in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. White Americans also saw their life expectancy decline, by 1.5 years.

Researchers say the reasons behind the life-expectancy disparities could include social inequality, crowded housing, low access to preventive information, and the disproportionate number of racial minorities who had to continue working outside the home in jobs that put them at higher risk for infection.

“It is important that public health officials consider the increased risk factors for Hispanic and Black Americans when implementing their disease prevention policies at the local level,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We must continue to make our resources, such as vaccines and educational materials, easily accessible where they are most needed.”

The [average life expectancy](#) in the U.S. nationally dropped by nearly two years in 2020, to 77 years from 78.8 in 2019. New York State saw the biggest drop in life expectancy from 2019 to 2020: three years. Hawaii had the smallest change, 0.2 years.

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.