



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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**September 1, 2022**

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*The Alliance wishes you and your family a safe and celebratory Labor Day weekend.*

## **Wisconsin Senator Doubles Down on Plans to Slash Earned Retirement Benefits on Campaign Trail**

Senator Ron Johnson (WI) this week discussed how to “[coax](#)” retirees back into the labor force during a tele town hall on Wednesday night. Earlier, Johnson [suggested that](#) earned benefits should be re-approved by Congress on an annual basis, and [insisted that](#) Social Security was “set up improperly” and should be turned over to Wall Street during a recent campaign stop.



Senator Ron Johnson (WI) speaking at CPAC 2011 in Washington, D.C. Photo Credit: Gage Skidmore, Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://flickr.com/photos/22007612@N05/5435567064>

Social Security is [gaining traction](#) as a top issue for voters, and Democrats are calling out those who are going after Social Security and Medicare. President **Joe**

**Biden** [said](#) that “Congressional Republicans want to put them on the chopping block every five years” [in a tweet](#) over the weekend, referring to the plan released by National Republican Senate Committee Chair Sen. **Rick Scott** (FL).

“Alliance members need to make sure all seniors know that their earned benefits are at stake this November,” said Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** “Seniors should pay close attention to this issue and make sure they turn out to elect candidates who will protect the retirement and health benefits they have earned.”

## **After Crackdown, Medicare Advantage Marketers Tone Down Sales Tactics**

Medicare Advantage plans are being forced to tone down their aggressive advertising this year in response to [increased oversight](#) from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The new guidelines were prompted by an increase in consumer complaints, which swelled by 165 percent between 2020 and 2021, with a total of 41,136 filed last year.

An investigation into Medicare Advantage sales tactics also spurred the agency's decision to tighten regulations, yielding some complaints alleging fraudulent practices. Sales call recordings suggested that callers were often confused about the product and who they were talking to, with some even thinking they were speaking to government representatives.

Medicare Advantage regulations are becoming increasingly relevant, as a [new analysis shows](#) that nearly half of those who are eligible for Medicare are enrolled in Advantage plans. Marketing efforts become particularly frenzied during the annual enrollment period for Medicare, which will go from October 15 to December 7 this year.

“Older Americans are deluged with health information, and it seems clear that some Medicare Advantage marketers crossed the line,” said Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**. “We encourage all retirees who are considering changing their coverage to get information from a trusted source, such as their union or the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP), not just from television or radio commercials.”

## **You're Invited: Celebrate Passage of the Inflation Reduction Act and Learn How it Will Lower Drug Prices**

The Alliance will host a special virtual event on **Thursday, September 15, at 4 PM Eastern time** to celebrate the passage of this historic legislation. We will have experts on hand to break down the law and answer questions about how it will be implemented over the next few years.

Please [click here to RSVP](#) for this free, one-hour online workshop.

An email with a link to join the session will be sent to those who sign up 24 hours before the session.

Questions? Email **Maureen Dunn**, Director of Field Mobilization for the Alliance, at [mdunn@retiredamericans.org](mailto:mdunn@retiredamericans.org).

## **New Study Shows Paxlovid Decreases COVID Deaths for Older People**

A new study [indicates that](#) Pfizer's COVID-19 treatment, Paxlovid, significantly reduces deaths and hospitalizations for patients aged 65 years and older. According to recent data, adults who are 65 years or older [account for](#) 80 percent of COVID-19 deaths and [more than half](#) of COVID-19 hospitalizations in the United States thus far.

The Food and Drug Administration has [also authorized](#) Pfizer and Moderna booster shots that are specifically tailored to combat Omicron variants of COVID-19, which are currently the dominant strains circulating in the United States.

“Seniors have a heightened risk of death or complications if they contract COVID-19,” said Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** “The results of this study are encouraging and confirm that vaccination and treatments like Paxlovid can do a lot to protect older Americans against severe illness.”

## Union Support Reaches Its Highest Point In Nearly Six Decades



The latest Gallup poll shows that [71 percent of Americans](#) currently approve of unions. Americans have not shown such a high level of support for unions since 1965.

Union workers are more likely than nonunion workers to have retirement benefits. According to 2020 data from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), 91% of union workers had access to a retirement plan compared to only 65% of nonunion workers.

This progress comes just in time for Labor Day, which is Monday, September 5, this year. In 1894, President **Grover Cleveland** signed the bill that made the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday into law. Cities, unions, and locals across the nation now use that day to celebrate and honor working people. You can [click here to find a Labor Day event](#) near you.

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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.