



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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**September 23, 2022**

## **Alliance, Members of Congress Praise Inflation Reduction Act's Health Care Measures at Capitol Hill Rally**

Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta** joined House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** (CA) and allies on Wednesday for a Capitol Hill rally celebrating the [Inflation Reduction Act's](#) (IRA's) drugs and health care measures. House Majority Leader **Steny Hoyer** (MD) and Reps. **Susie Lee** (NV), **Lauren Underwood** (IL), **Peter Welch** (VT) and **Susan Wild** (PA) were also among the speakers at the event.



Executive Director Fiesta at the podium Wednesday

The rally drew attention to the IRA, signed into law by President **Joe Biden** on August 16, and the many benefits it provides for all Americans. Benefits for seniors include:

- \$35 insulin copays for Medicare beneficiaries beginning in 2023;
- All recommended adult vaccines free for Medicare beneficiaries beginning in 2023;
- Medicare beneficiaries will no longer face Big Pharma's outrageous price hikes that outpace inflation beginning in 2023;
- Medicare Part D beneficiaries will have out-of-pocket costs for prescription drugs capped at \$2,000 per year beginning in 2025.

"Alliance members have been active and drawing attention to outrageously high drug prices since 2003 – and fighting to give Medicare the ability to negotiate lower prices," said Fiesta. "For the last 20 years the pharmaceutical corporations have used their monopoly power to gouge seniors and taxpayers. The common sense solution to allow Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices is finally here."

### **House Committee Passes The Social Security Fairness Act to Repeal Unfair WEP/GPO Social Security Provisions**

The House Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday voted to send a bill, the [Social Security Fairness Act](#), H.R. 82, to the full House of Representatives.

The bill repeals two titles of the Social Security Act that reduce or eliminate benefits for 2.5 million Americans in 15 states who work or worked in public service — the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO). These provisions were enacted in 1983.

The Windfall Elimination Provision reduces Social Security payments for workers who qualify for benefits based on work where they paid into the program, but who also receive a public pension from employment not covered by Social Security. The Government Pension Offset reduces spousal benefits for surviving spouses who collect government pensions.

"Everyone should receive the full Social Security benefits they have earned," said Executive Director **Fiesta**. "We must keep fighting to repeal these unfair provisions that have put the retirement security of too many Americans at risk."

### **Many Republicans Continue to Support Privatizing Social Security, Medicare**

**Don Bolduc**, New Hampshire's GOP Senate nominee, [advocated privatizing Medicare](#) during a campaign town hall in early August, according to a recording of the event obtained by *POLITICO*.

Bolduc's comments came in response to a woman who complained about Medicare and Medicaid, arguing they were worsening outcomes for elderly patients and hamstringing medical professionals. Bolduc responded that he frequently speaks about how major reform is necessary for the programs.

"The privatization is hugely important," the retired army general told the audience in the town of Pembroke on Aug. 2. "Getting government out of it, getting government money with strings attached out of it."

A Bolduc spokesperson walked back Bolduc's comments, saying the candidate now opposes privatizing Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Other GOP Senate nominees in some of the country's most competitive races this year have also faced scrutiny over their current or past support for privatizing the programs, in some cases forcing them to take back their remarks.

In Arizona, GOP Senate nominee **Blake Masters** floated the idea of privatizing Social Security during a candidate forum in June. In Ohio, Republican nominee **J.D. Vance** clarified that he no longer agrees with comments he made roughly a decade ago calling for major cuts to both Social Security and Medicare. Republican Sen. **Ron Johnson** in Wisconsin has taken heat for suggesting that funding for Medicare and Social Security should not be automatically renewed each year, but instead become discretionary spending subject to annual congressional review.

"Some terrible ideas never die," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Privatizing means 'cutting,' and Alliance members will continue to support candidates who want to protect and expand Social Security and Medicare, not cut them."

### ***Kaiser Health News: Clearing Pollution Helps Clear the Fog of Aging — And May Cut the Risk of Dementia*** **By Judith Graham**

During the past decade, a growing body of research has shown that air pollution harms older adults' brains, contributing to cognitive decline and dementia. What hasn't been clear is whether improving air quality would benefit brain health.

Two studies published this year by researchers at six universities and the National Institute on Aging provide the first evidence of such benefits in an older population.



One report, published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), found that the risk of dementia declined significantly in women 74 and older following a decadelong reduction in two types of air pollution: [nitrogen dioxide](#), a gaseous byproduct of emissions from motor vehicles, industrial sources, and natural events such as wildfires; and [fine particulate matter](#), a mix of extremely small solids and liquids arising from similar sources.

A second report in [PLOS Medicine](#), relying on the same sample of more than 2,200 older women, found that lower levels of these pollutants were associated with a slower rate of cognitive decline. In areas where air quality improvement was most notable, the rate of cognitive decline was delayed by up to 1.6 years, depending on the test.

Read more [here](#).

## Alliance Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month

September 15 to October 15 is National Hispanic American Heritage Month. Each year, Americans observe the month-long occasion by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President **Lyndon Johnson**.

The day of September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries that include Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively.

The Alliance joins the AFL-CIO in taking this opportunity to showcase how the Hispanic American community has worked proudly for working people and civil rights for many years. The AFL-CIO will be profiling leaders and activists to spotlight the diverse contributions Hispanics and Latinos have made to the labor movement this month on their [blog](#).

“The Alliance joins the AFL-CIO in commemorating the contributions of Hispanic-Americans to the labor movement and to improving retirement security for all Americans as part of that effort,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “As we read news stories about the awful treatment recently of Hispanic migrants [by some governors](#), we applaud the efforts of groups like [Lawyers for Civil Rights](#) who remind us that no human being should be used as a political pawn.”

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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.