



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

March 10, 2023

President Biden Goes to Bat for Retirees with His 2024 Budget

President **Biden** wrote an [op-ed](#) in *The New York Times* Tuesday to showcase his plans to protect and preserve Medicare, and he released the administration's complete [budget proposal](#) for fiscal 2024 on Thursday.

The budget tackles two of the most pressing issues for current and future retirees: lowering prescription drug prices and adding 25 years to the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund; it pays for it by asking those with annual income above \$400,000 to pay a little more into Medicare.

“The plan lowers out-of-pocket costs for seniors who need high-cost drugs by expanding the Medicare price negotiation that was introduced in the Inflation Reduction Act,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “Capping older Americans’ generic drug costs for chronic conditions at \$2 will also help seniors pay for necessities like food, housing and energy.”

The budget calls for a 10% increase — \$1.4 billion — over the 2023 enacted level for the Social Security Administration (SSA) to invest in staff, information technology, and other improvements. The funds would improve customer service at SSA field offices, state disability determination services, and teleservice centers.

In addition, the plan invests \$150 billion over 10 years to improve and expand Medicaid home and community-based services, such as personal care services, to allow seniors and individuals with disabilities to remain in their homes and stay active in their communities while improving the quality of jobs for home care workers. Even with those much-needed investments, the budget will reduce the deficit by nearly \$3 trillion over 10 years.

“We urge Congress to take this proposal seriously, and reject proposals that will lead to cuts to Medicare, including raising the eligibility age or further privatizing the system,” Fiesta added.

Social Security and Medicare are Still in Congressional Crosshairs

House Republicans have [multiple rival road maps](#) for budget cuts, just as the high-stakes battle over the nation's debt limit intensifies. Some lawmakers are still considering Social Security and Medicare cuts, including a group of approximately a dozen Senators led by **Angus King** (I-ME) and **Bill Cassidy** (R-LA), who hope to [recreate a bipartisan deal](#).

Adding to the concerns was Sen. **Joe Manchin's** (D-WV) televised comment that there might be a "better program" to consider for future beneficiaries.

"Many members of Congress continue to insist that plans to cut Social Security and Medicare are off the table, but others are talking about plans that will slash benefits now or in the future," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "The Alliance will continue to work to ensure the programs are safe from cuts for both today's retirees and future generations."

Thursday was National "Slam the Scam" Day

The SSA designated Thursday, March 9, as National "Slam the Scam" Day, a day to raise public awareness of Social Security and other government imposter scams. The day was part of National Consumer Protection Week, March 5 - 11, 2023.



In 2022, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received over 191,000 complaints of government imposter scams. Of those, 14.6% said they lost money to a scammer - a total of \$508.96 million. To prevent further losses, experts advise using caution when receiving calls or messages from someone claiming to be from a government agency.

Scammers often pretend to be from an agency or organization you know to gain your trust. Other tactics include saying there is a problem or a prize; pressuring you to act immediately; or telling you to pay in a specific way.

Social Security will never threaten arrest or legal action if you do not immediately send money to resolve an overpayment you supposedly received in error. Also, SSA officials will never promise to increase benefits

or resolve identity theft issues for a fee or by moving money into a protected account, require payment with a retail gift card or wire transfer, or tell you to mail cash.

"SSA has a specific [page](#) that allows the public to report scams involving Social Security without difficulty," advised **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

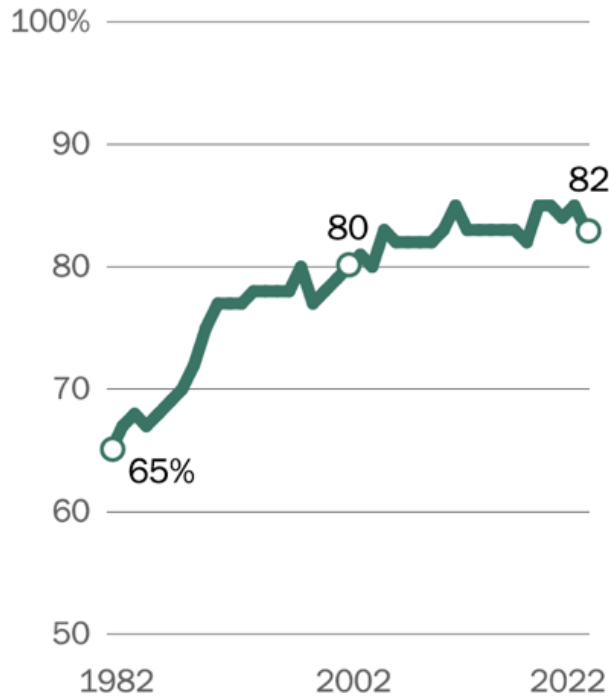
A representative of the SSA led a "Slam the Scam" seminar on recognizing and preventing Social Security, government imposter, and identity theft scams for Alliance members. A recording of the seminar is available [here](#).

Alliance Chapters Celebrate International Women's Day, Women's History Month

Sixty-two participants, including Texas Alliance (TARA) member and former executive vice-president of the AFL-CIO **Linda Chavez-Thompson**, celebrated the [Dallas AFL-CIO's Women's Day Dinner](#) with a video greeting from Rep. **Marc Veasey** Wednesday. TARA President

Gender pay gap narrowed in the 1980s and '90s, but progress has stalled since

Women's median hourly earnings in the U.S. as a % of men's median hourly earnings



Note: Samples include employed workers ages 16 or older with positive earnings, working full time or part time, excluding the self-employed.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of the Current Population Survey outgoing rotation group files (IPUMS).

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and Dallas AFL-CIO president-elect **Gene Lantz** emceed the event, which was held at the CWA hall in Dallas and included 16 TARA members.

Other Alliance chapters, including the Arizona Alliance, are also celebrating Women's History Month with events throughout the month of March.

In 1982, women earned 65 cents for every dollar men earned. Today they earn 82 cents, barely more than the 80 cents they earned in 2002, according to a [Pew Research Center analysis](#) of median hourly earnings of full-time and part-time workers.

"We must respect women by ensuring that every woman receives equal pay for equal work. That means equal opportunity in education and jobs," said President **Roach**. "Higher wages lead to higher Social Security benefits in retirement. This matters, since women aged 65 or older are about 43% more likely than men to live on an income below the poverty level."