



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Insulin Prices Cut for More Patients as Eli Lilly Caves to Pressure

Drug corporation Eli Lilly [announced](#) Wednesday that it will cap out-of-pocket patient costs for its two most popular insulin drugs, Humalog and Humulin, at \$35 a month. Patients with private insurance and who use participating pharmacies will pay the new, lower prices.

Alliance members have been at the forefront of lowering the price of drugs like insulin for years, adding to the pressure on the company to act. The Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law by President **Biden** on August 16, 2022, had already capped insulin copays at \$35 per month for Medicare beneficiaries, adding to the pressure to cut prices for other consumers.

The price cuts will not take effect until October, giving the drugmaker seven more months of profits from high priced insulin. Also, since Lilly caps out-of-pocket costs to patients but not necessarily the prices charged to insurance companies, their plan could result in cost-shifting and higher insurance premiums.

“All Americans who need insulin should be able to get it at an affordable price,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “However, we should not have to rely on voluntary actions by wealthy corporations to make lower drug prices a reality. Our activism needs to remain vocal and strong. Congress must build on the Inflation Reduction Act to lower drug prices for all Americans.”

Alliance Marks Scrap the Cap Day



People earning one million dollars or more each year stopped contributing to Social Security for the rest of 2023 on February 28. For 2023, Social Security taxes are only paid on the first \$160,200 of wage income.

Several members of Congress have introduced bills this year that would expand Social Security and require the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share into Social Security by raising or eliminating the cap on wages subject to the payroll tax. All of these bills would increase both the solvency of the Trust Fund and increase benefits.

Others on Capitol Hill are discussing significant changes to Social Security, including [reportedly](#) raising the retirement age and allowing the Trust Fund to be invested in the stock market.

According to [Semafor](#), a bipartisan group of senators led by Sens. **Angus King** (I-ME) and **Bill Cassidy** (R-LA) is considering a plan to gradually raise the retirement age to “about 70” as part of discussions to overhaul Social Security.

“Raising the retirement age and allowing Wall Street to gamble with our earned benefits is unacceptable,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We don’t need gimmicks or schemes when we can strengthen the Trust Fund by requiring the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share.”

Congress Reintroduces Protecting the Right to Organize Act

Sen. **Bernie Sanders** (I-VT) and Reps. **Bobby Scott** (D-VA) and **Brian Fitzpatrick** (R-PA) [introduced](#) the **Richard L. Trumka** Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act (H.R. 20 in the House), which would restore the right of workers to freely and fairly form a union and bargain together for changes in the workplace.



The legislation, named for the former AFL-CIO president who died in 2021, would strengthen the middle class and improve retirement security. Union workers have higher wages and can negotiate for benefits such as health care and employer contributions to retirement plans. Union jobs are also more likely to come with negotiated defined benefit pensions, which ensure lifelong retirement income.

“The Alliance wholeheartedly endorses the PRO Act to restore fairness to the economy, because it strengthens the federal laws that protect workers’ right to join a union and it improves retirement security for millions,” said **President Roach**. “It is the most significant piece of pro-worker, pro-retiree legislation in Congress and it remains a top priority for Alliance members.”

Kaiser Health News: Biden Promises to Fight GOP on ‘Gutting’ Medicaid. Budget Talks Seem Like Another Story.
by Michael McAuliff

Most lawmakers — Republicans and Democrats alike — have declared the marquee safety-net programs of Medicare and Social Security off-limits for cuts as a divided Washington heads for a showdown over the national debt and government spending. Health programs for lower-income Americans, though, have gotten no such bipartisan assurances.

More than 20 million people gained Medicaid coverage in the past three years after Congress expanded access to the entitlement program during the covid-19 pandemic, [swelling Medicaid’s population by about 30%](#). But enrollment will fall starting in April, when the pandemic-era changes end and [states begin cutting coverage](#) for Americans who are no longer eligible.

On Tuesday, President Joe Biden pressured Republicans to release the party’s plans to cut government spending, which are expected to call for deeper cuts to Medicaid — and could offer Americans a preview of Republicans’ wish list should the party gain full power in the 2024 election.

Read more [here](#).

Julie Su Nominated for Secretary of Labor

President Biden [nominated Julie Su](#) to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor on Tuesday. If confirmed by the Senate, she would become the first Asian American to serve in a cabinet-level role in his Cabinet.

Currently the Deputy Secretary of Labor, Su previously served as the California labor commissioner and secretary for the California Labor and Workforce Development Agency. A nationally recognized expert on workers’ rights and civil rights, she was nominated after Secretary **Marty Walsh** announced his resignation to lead the National Hockey League’s players’ union.

“Congratulations to Ms. Su,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “We look forward to working with her and her department to support workers’ rights, protect our pensions and further Americans’ ability to enjoy a secure, dignified retirement.”

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.