



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Americans Could Lose \$20,000 in Retirement Savings if GOP Refuses to Raise the Debt Ceiling

The Joint Economic Committee (JEC), a congressional group that reviews economic policy, recently released a [report](#) analyzing the consequences of failing to raise the debt ceiling. Based on a study of the 2011 debt limit negotiations, the analysis finds that Americans could lose \$20,000 in retirement savings. Private student-debt loads could also surge.

The nation could run out of extraordinary measures to pay its bills as soon as July — meaning there is a risk of unprecedented, severe financial consequences.

The debt ceiling was raised three times during President **Trump's** term with bipartisan support. This year, however, Congressional Republicans say President **Biden** must satisfy their fiscal demands before they'll vote to raise the debt limit again. To date, Speaker **Kevin McCarthy** [has not specified](#) what his caucus' demands are and whether 218 House Republicans would vote for whatever those demands turn out to be.

"The JEC study shows just another way that Americans, especially retirees, could suffer if Republicans continue to play partisan games with the economy," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "This is irresponsible, and older Americans must continue to demand action to prevent an economic catastrophe."

Need for Escorts Following Relatively Minor Medical Procedures Questioned

Following even basic screenings and operations, patients often must arrange for [someone to help deliver them home](#) — and liability fears have led many health care providers to say that a taxi or rideshare driver taking you to your sidewalk is not sufficient. For many older people, finding someone to escort them back inside their residence is burdensome — and some patient advocates think it is required more frequently than it should be.

Older people across the country describe maddening efforts to find "door-through-door" escorts for outpatient surgery and screenings that involve anesthesia, especially if facilities require those escorts to remain on the premises until the patient's discharge. Patient advocates say these requirements lead many to skip important preventive care like colonoscopies.

“Health care providers need to think about the consequences of their policies and whether they are actually required,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “When door-through-door escorts are medically necessary, they should at least assist patients by providing them with trusted services that are willing to perform this service at a reasonable cost.”

Kaiser Health News: Fatigue Is Common Among Older Adults, and It Has Many Possible Causes

By Judith Graham

Nothing prepared **Linda C. Johnson** of Indianapolis for the fatigue that descended on her after a diagnosis of stage 4 lung cancer in early 2020.



Initially, Johnson, now 77, thought she was depressed. She could barely summon the energy to get dressed in the morning. Some days, she couldn't get out of bed.

But as she began to get her affairs in order, Johnson realized something else was going on. However long she slept the night before, she woke up exhausted. She felt depleted, even if she didn't do much during the day.

Read more [here](#).

Photo: Linda C. Johnson began experiencing fatigue after a diagnosis of stage 4 lung cancer in early 2020. Fatigue is a common companion of many illnesses that beset older adults.

AFSCME Commemorates Anniversary of 1968 Sanitation Strike with New Podcast



April 4 was the 55th anniversary of the death of **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.** He was assassinated while in Memphis to support sanitation workers who were represented by the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 1733 during their important “I AM A MAN” strike.

To honor Rev. King's sacrifice and the strike's legacy, AFSCME released a special podcast about the events that transpired in Memphis in 1968. The [I AM](#)

Story podcast features new interviews with strikers involved in the struggle, including **Rev. James Lawson**, Martin Luther King III and many others.

“Memphis sanitation workers were subjected to inhuman conditions on the job while making just \$0.65 per hour,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “When conditions turned from

hazardous to deadly, they said enough was enough. We should all remember their sacrifice as we continue the struggle for safe working conditions and fair pay.”

The podcast is available in both [audio](#) and [video](#) formats.

Did You Know...Social Security and Income Taxes

According to the [Social Security Administration \(SSA\)](#), you must pay taxes on up to 85% of your Social Security benefits if you file a:

- Federal tax return as an “individual” and your “combined income” exceeds \$25,000.
- Joint return, and you and your spouse have “combined income” of more than \$32,000.

According to SSA, most Americans who are married and file a separate return pay some income taxes on their earned benefits.

For more information visit the [IRS website](#) or consult with a tax advisor.

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.