



# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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

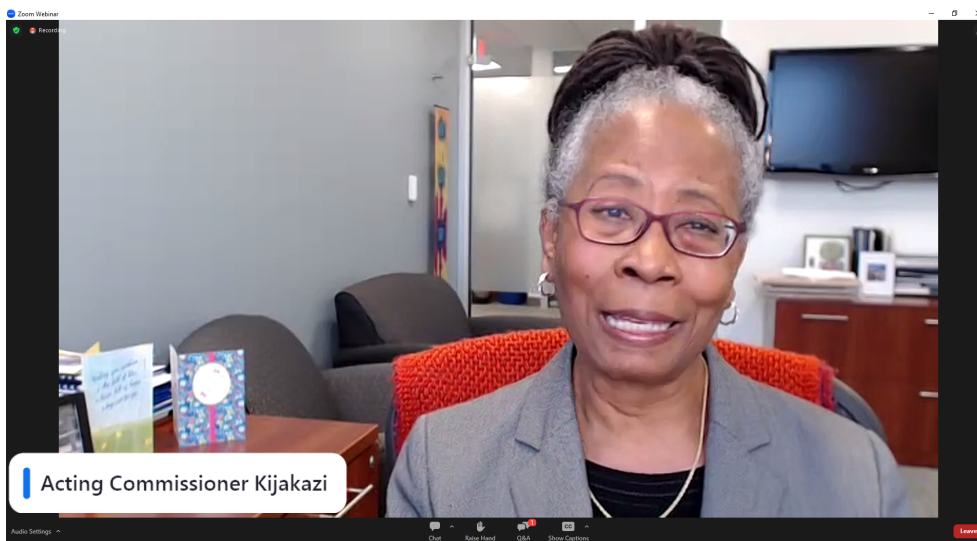
[www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org)

Spanish version: [www.alianzadejubilados.org](http://www.alianzadejubilados.org)

May 19, 2023

## Alliance Hosts Town Hall with Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Social Security Commissioner

Alliance members joined **Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi**, MSW, Ph.D., Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA), on Wednesday for an Older Americans Month Retiree Town Hall webinar.



The Acting Commissioner discussed why Social Security is vital to Americans of all ages, spoke about what SSA is doing to improve service, and answered some audience questions.

During the webinar, Dr. Kijakazi noted that last year, SSA employees completed about 10 million benefit claims, assisted nearly 13 million visitors at field offices and

answered about 69 million phone calls. However, hiring has been limited over the past decade due to insufficient and untimely funding.

If you missed the event, the Acting Commissioner's remarks are on the Alliance's YouTube channel [here](#).

## Debt Ceiling Update: Talks Continue as June 1 Deadline Approaches

President **Joe Biden** and Vice President **Kamala Harris** [met](#) with House Speaker **Kevin McCarthy** (R-CA), House Minority Leader **Hakeem Jeffries** (D-NY), Senate Majority Leader **Chuck Schumer** (D-NY), and Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R-KY) Tuesday to continue talks about raising the debt ceiling and prevent the nation from defaulting on its financial obligations.

Following the meeting, President Biden and Speaker McCarthy named top staff to negotiate a deal to avert an unprecedented default. Biden will also cut short an upcoming trip to Asia in order to close a deal before a June 1 deadline.

The House GOP has demanded that its budget bill, which Biden and Congressional Democrats strongly oppose, be passed by the Senate in conjunction with any debt ceiling increase. As written, it slashes veterans' benefits, housing and food assistance for millions of seniors. It also enacts a 22% across-the-board cut to transportation, education, and health care. That means older Americans have to wait longer to get information about their Social Security and Medicare benefits.

Without a debt limit increase, retirement savings accounts are expected to lose at least 20% of their value. Interest rates will surge, hurting businesses and increasing unemployment, and Social Security payments could be delayed or disrupted.

"Extremist GOP House members are willing to tank the economy unless they are allowed to slash essential services and programs for seniors," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "These partisan shenanigans are not in the nation's best interest and we must demand that this crisis be resolved."

### **URGENT ACTION NEEDED:**

Please make your voice heard. [Click to tell your Senators and Representative to raise the debt ceiling and vote against the House GOP budget.](#)

### **Economic Policy Institute: Almost Half of Older Workers With Physically Challenging Jobs with Low Pay May Be Unable to Retire**

The Economic Policy Institute released a [report](#) this week showing that significant numbers of Americans over 50 endure difficult working conditions, including physically taxing, dangerous and stressful jobs — jobs that often don't even pay enough to allow them to ever retire.



The report found that 54.2% of older workers are exposed to unhealthy or hazardous conditions and 46.1% of older workers have high-pressure jobs.

To ensure older workers can afford to retire when they need to, the report advises providing support for workers with caregiving responsibilities, expanding Social Security coverage and benefits, and bolstering health and safety protections in the workplace.

"Some policymakers have proposed that older Americans could delay retirement to increase their savings. However, with 50.3% of older workers enduring physically demanding jobs, proposals to delay retirement make little sense," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of

the Alliance. “We must [expand Social Security](#) to continue to provide retirement security for current and future generations.”

## NYSARA Holds Convention in Albany, Elects Leaders



State Senator Rachel May, NYSARA Member and former chair of Committee on Aging, with NYSARA Central NY Chapter President Bill Spreter

The New York State Alliance (NYSARA) held its convention on Thursday, re-electing President **Barry Kaufmann**, Vice President **Paul Schuh**, and Treasurer **Gary Lanahan**. New York State Senator **Rachel May**, member of the Senate Health Committee and former Chair of the Senate Aging Committee, talked about the need to expand affordable housing for seniors in New York state and prospects for increasing funding for a range of state services for retirees. **Lisa Cutler**, Director of Communications for the Alliance, gave a presentation about how to write letters to the editor and op-eds that can build support for strengthening and expanding Social Security and Medicare and lowering prescription drug prices.

## Alliance Celebrates Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May is not only Older Americans Month, it is also Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month.

The White House has commemorated the occasion with a [proclamation](#), stating in part, "Despite the immeasurable ways AA and NHPs enrich this country, we continue to see persistent racism, harassment, and hate crimes against these communities. Attacks on Asian American women and elders have left too many families afraid to leave their homes and too many loved ones traumatized."

"Alliance members join President Biden in honoring the achievements and contributions of the AAPI communities," added **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Our AAPI friends and neighbors have been key allies in advocating for labor law changes that have improved our lives, and we are a better nation when we pull together and celebrate our diversity."

---

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.