



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Save the Date: Alliance Retirement Security Symposium on October 17

The Alliance's annual Retirement Security Symposium will be on Tuesday, October 17, 2023, from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time, at the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C. All Alliance members will be invited to attend virtually.

The annual event brings together government officials, labor movement leaders, policy experts, Social Security and pension advocates, academics, attorneys, economists and young workers who work on retirement security and social insurance issues.



House Democratic Leader **Hakeem Jeffries** (NY) and Rep. **John Larson** (CT), House Committee on Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Ranking Member, have been invited to speak. Participants will hear the views of national experts on important pension, Social Security and other retirement issues during the event.

“The symposium will provide tools so individuals and organizations can address the retirement security

Leader Jeffries (left) with President Roach in Washington DC on April 26 at the Machinists Union townhouse

emergency that the nation faces as 10,000 Americans turn 65 every day,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “More details will follow as the event approaches.”

White House Releases State by State Fact Sheets on the GOP House’s “Default on America Act”

President **Biden** invited the "big four" congressional leaders – Senate Majority Leader **Chuck Schumer**, Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell**, Leader **Jeffries** and House Speaker

Kevin McCarthy – to the White House next week, after the federal government's debt managers warned Congress of a possible June 1 deadline to raise the statutory borrowing cap.

Ahead of that meeting the White House released [51 fact sheets](#) highlighting the severe impact of the Default on America Act (H.R. 2811), passed by GOP members of the House of Representatives last week, on Americans in every state and the District of Columbia.

Nationally, the legislation would have devastating effects on the American people. For older Americans, it would:

- **Worsen Social Security and Medicare Assistance Wait Times for Seniors.** People applying for disability benefits would have to wait at least two months longer for a decision. With fewer staff available, seniors would also be forced to endure longer wait times when they call for assistance for both Social Security and Medicare, and as many as 240 Social Security field offices could be forced to close or shorten the hours they are open to the public.
- **Jeopardize Food Assistance for Older Adults.** House Republicans are [threatening](#) food assistance for up to 900,000 older adults with the Default on America Act's harsh new eligibility restrictions in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
- **Raise Housing Costs for Americans.** More than 600,000 families would lose access to rental assistance, including older adults, persons with disabilities, and families with children, who without rental assistance would be at risk of homelessness.

In addition, about 600,000 people would become uninsured under the House Republican debt bill's plan to impose [Medicaid](#) work requirements.

"Congress needs to raise the debt ceiling with no strings attached," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Seniors will not stand for being taken hostage by MAGA Republicans in the House so that the GOP can implement harmful cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid or critical social programs in exchange for avoiding a default on our financial obligations."

Five of the most likely outcomes of the debt ceiling debate and their implications for the country and economy are explained [here](#).

Register Today for the Alliance Town Hall with Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Social Security Commissioner



Alliance members are invited to join **Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi, Ph.D, MSW**, Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA), for a Retiree Town Hall on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at 1:30 PM Eastern Time.

The Acting Commissioner will discuss why Social Security is so vital to Americans of all ages and what SSA is doing to improve service.

Please click [here](#) to join the event.

KFF Health News: Biden Administration Issues New Warning About Medical Credit Cards

By Noam N. Levey

The Biden administration on Thursday cautioned Americans about the growing risks of medical credit cards and other loans for medical bills, warning in a new report that high interest rates can deepen patients' debts and threaten their financial security.

In its [report](#), the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau estimated that people in the U.S. paid \$1 billion in deferred interest on medical credit cards and other medical financing in just three years, from 2018 to 2020.

The interest payments can inflate medical bills by almost 25%, the agency found by analyzing financial data that lenders submitted to regulators.

"Lending outfits are designing costly loan products to peddle to patients looking to make ends meet on their medical bills," said **Rohit Chopra**, director of CFPB, the federal consumer watchdog. "These new forms of medical debt can create financial ruin for individuals who get sick."

Read more [here](#).

Older Americans Month Begins with May Day



TARA members picketing in front of a Starbucks store Monday

Monday, May 1 was not only the first day of Older Americans Month, it was also May Day, (International Workers' Day). Throughout May, Alliance members across the country are

celebrating seniors' contributions to the nation and using the occasion to recognize the power of older adults to influence our communities. President Biden has issued a [proclamation](#) in honor of Older Americans Month.

May Day is a time to celebrate all workers and the efforts of trade unions and the labor movement. It is also a day of remembrance, since it honors the workers who died during the Haymarket affair bombing in 1886 in Chicago while protesting for an eight-hour workday.

Members of the Texas Alliance (TARA), Young Active Labor Leaders and other activists marked the day by picketing at Starbucks stores across the Dallas metro area. Their signs called for higher wages, the freedom to join a union and other workers' rights.

TARA members pioneered the "flying pickets" tactic at a string of Starbucks, going from one shop to another and quietly leafleting the employees and customers before picketing on the sidewalk outside.

"International Workers' Day is a chance to promote the change we need," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "Legislatively, the best thing we can do as a nation in partnership with local action is to urge Congress to pass the [PRO Act](#), introduced by Representatives **Brian Fitzpatrick** (R-PA) and **Bobby Scott** (D-VA) in the U.S. House as H.R. 20 and by Senator **Bernie Sanders** (I-VT) in the Senate as S. 567. It will make it easier to join or form a union, and that means better wages, health care, pensions and retirement security."

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.