



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Federal Government Shutdown Looms as GOP House Members Disagree on Next Steps

A federal government [shutdown](#) appears more and more likely ahead of Saturday's midnight government funding deadline, as Republican House members continue to squabble amongst themselves.



Should a shutdown occur, Social Security payments to beneficiaries would continue as scheduled. However, new Social Security applications would not be processed, delaying first-time payments. Disability claims that need decisions and review would also not advance, adding to a backlog that already exists due to an underfunding of the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSA will also not be able to answer questions that beneficiaries may have.

"It's time for GOP House members to stop playing politics with the people's business," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "Real people are going to be hurt if they cannot figure out how to carry out the most fundamental part of their job: keeping the government running."

## Medicare Open Enrollment Starts October 15: What to Know about the Process and Coverage Options

The annual Medicare open enrollment period runs from October 15th to December 7th each year. During this time, Medicare beneficiaries can review features of Medicare plans offered in their area and make changes to their coverage which goes into effect on January 1st of the following year. The changes may include switching from traditional Medicare to a Medicare Advantage plan (or vice versa), switching between Medicare Advantage plans, and electing or switching between Medicare Part D prescription drug plans.



## Navigating Medicare

“Open enrollment season can be confusing and overwhelming for many retirees,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary Treasurer of the Alliance. “But it’s worth taking the time to review your health care coverage to make sure you’re in the best plan for your current health care needs.”

Beneficiaries can contact their State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) to get free, unbiased information about Medicare options in their state.

Find your local SHIP office [here](#).

### **KFF Health News: Biden Administration to Ban Medical Debt From Americans’ Credit Scores**

**By Noam N. Levey**

The Biden administration announced a major initiative to protect Americans from medical debt on Thursday, outlining [plans to develop](#) federal rules barring unpaid medical bills from affecting patients’ credit scores.

The regulations, if enacted, would potentially help tens of millions of people who have medical debt on their credit reports, eliminating information that can depress consumers’ scores and make it harder for many to get a job, rent an apartment, or secure a car loan.

New rules would also represent one of the most significant federal actions to tackle medical debt, a problem that burdens about 100 million people and forces legions to take on extra work, give up their homes, and ration food and other essentials, a [KFF Health News-NPR investigation](#) found.

Read more [here](#).

### **You’re Invited: Alliance’s Retirement Security Symposium Less Than Three Weeks Away**

Join the Alliance at our annual Retiree Security Symposium, *Preparing for Retirement, Individual and Collective Efforts*, an Alliance for Retired Americans seminar on **Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 9:00 AM** at AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, DC.

**Liz Shuler**, President of the AFL-CIO; **Fred Redmond**, Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO and Executive Vice President of the Alliance; and **Rep. John Larson** (CT), House Committee on Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Ranking Member, will make presentations.

Representatives from retiree organizations the National Institute on Retirement Security (NIRS), the National United Committee to Protect Pensions (NUCPP) and the Pension Rights Center will give reports. In addition, AFT, AFGE, AFSCME, and IAMAW will discuss individual and collective efforts for a secure retirement.

Space is limited, so please **RSVP** at <https://tinyurl.com/Symposium101723> by **October 3, 2023** and indicate if you will attend in person or virtually.

## Retirees Mourn the Loss of USW International President Tom Conway

**Tom Conway**, International President of the United Steelworkers, [has died at age 71](#). President Conway was elected as leader of the union in 2019.

"The labor movement has lost a champion of workers and a relentless advocate for retirees with the passing of Tom Conway," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "He was not just a leader for Steelworkers, he was a force for all union members and older Americans. His work as an executive board member of the Alliance for Retired Americans reflected that dedication for years."

"He knew that pensions were earned through hard work and were a promise to be kept. He always fought to ensure that commitment was honored when corporations closed or faced economic difficulties," President Roach added. "He will be greatly missed by his family, friends and all who knew and loved him."

## Senator Dianne Feinstein Passes Away

Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** has [died](#) at the age of 90. Elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992, she was the first woman elected to the Senate from California, the first female president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, and the first female mayor of San Francisco.

Sen. Feinstein earned a lifetime pro-retiree score of [95% in the Alliance's Congressional Voting Record](#), including a perfect score of 100% in 2022.

"Sen. Feinstein was a trailblazer for women in politics and a great friend of seniors," said President **Roach**. "Our condolences go out to all whose lives she touched throughout her most impressive career."

The U.S. Senate makeup stands at 50 Democrats and 49 Republicans until California Governor **Gavin Newsom** appoints an interim senator. An election will take place in 2024 to determine a long term successor.