



## 2024 Winter Legislative Toolkit Lobby Visit Guide

### Preparing for Your Lobby Visit

1. **Identify Your Objectives:** Clearly define what you aim to achieve with the visit, whether it's to persuade, inform, or request specific action on legislation affecting retirees.
2. **Schedule the Visit:** Contact your legislator's office to request a meeting. Be flexible with dates but aim for times when legislators are in their district offices. Provide a brief overview of what you wish to discuss. Once you've set a date, add it to the [2024 Lobby Visit Tracker](#)
3. **Prepare Your Team:** Select a diverse group of members who can share personal stories related to your advocacy goals. Assign roles for each member, such as the lead speaker, storyteller, or note-taker.
4. **Develop Your Message:** Craft a concise, compelling message focusing on how the legislation impacts retirees. Bring Alliance Fact Sheets and Position Papers to leave with the legislator.

### Conducting Your Lobby Visit

1. **Start Strong:** Begin with introductions and thank the legislator for their time. Quickly establish your connection to the community and the Alliance for Retired Americans.
2. **Share Personal Stories:** Have members share their personal stories to highlight the real-world impacts of policies on retirees. These narratives are powerful tools for making your case.
3. **Make Specific Asks:** Clearly state what you are asking for, whether it's support for or opposition to specific legislation. Be clear and direct about the action you want the legislator to take.
4. **Engage in Dialogue:** Encourage an open dialogue. Be prepared to answer questions and provide further information as needed. Listen actively to the legislator's perspective.
5. **Document the Visit:** Take photos and make detailed notes on the legislator's responses and any commitments made.



## 2024 Winter Legislative Toolkit Lobby Visit Guide

### After Your Visit

1. **Follow Up:** Send a thank you letter reiterating your key points and any commitments made during the visit. Include any additional information requested.
2. **Report Back:** Talk with your group about how the meeting went, come to agreement on the minutes and how the legislator responded according to the Lobby Report Back Form. Designate a member of your group to send the report using [this form](#) and send pictures to [Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org](mailto:Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org).
3. **Maintain Engagement:** Keep the lines of communication open with the legislator's office. Update them on related developments and invite them to Alliance events.



## 2024 Winter Legislative Toolkit Lobby Visit Talking Points

### Debt Commission Legislation

- The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly opposes H.R. 5779 and S. 3262, and any other legislation to create committees or commissions to do the work of Americans' elected representatives without input from the American people.
- Social Security and Medicare are earned benefits, vital for over 66 million Americans, providing necessary income and health care.
- The legislation seeks to bypass public and congressional input, undermining democratic processes.
- The premise of the commission is flawed. Social Security does **not** contribute to the federal deficit.
- The proposed closed door, fast-track process is anti-democratic. It drastically limits public input and does not allow full debate or amendments.
- The commission's focus on cuts rather than revenue increases is predetermined and excludes balanced fiscal solutions.
- The Alliance demands Congress reject any attempts to undermine Social Security and Medicare under the guise of deficit reduction.

### WEP/GPO Repeal

- We strongly urge members of Congress to cosponsor and pass H.R. 82 and S. 597: The Social Security Fairness Act, introduced by Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA) and Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA), and by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), to repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).
- The terribly unfair WEP and GPO provisions reduce Social Security benefits for public sector retirees who receive a public pension or the spouse or survivor of a Social Security beneficiary who worked for a period of time in a job not covered by the Social Security program.
- The affected retirees dedicated their lives to public service and include public school teachers, police officers, postal workers, firefighters and certain federal, state and local government employees.



## **2024 Winter Legislative Toolkit**

### **Lobby Visit Talking Points**

- More than 2.5 million Social Security beneficiaries are affected by one or both of these provisions.
- Those affected do not receive the full Social Security benefits that they otherwise earned. The WEP and GPO disproportionately affect lower-income workers and women, and as a result, many face economic hardship during retirement.



## Hero/Zero Award Event Guide

In 2024, it's more important than ever to champion our retiree heroes in Congress and call out those who've fallen short with our Retiree Hero/Zero events. To strategize around events, or to request a Hero or Zero certificate, contact Maureen Dunn at [mdunn@retiredamericans.org](mailto:mdunn@retiredamericans.org).

### Event Ideas

- **Lobby Visits for Heroes:** Schedule meetings with your Heroes to personally present the award, capturing the moment for social media and press releases. Prepare a brief, impactful speech that highlights their contributions to retiree rights.
- **Candidate Endorsement Events:** Coordinate with the National Alliance to include a Hero award presentation in the event agenda. This public acknowledgment not only honors the legislator but also signals to potential voters their commitment to retiree issues.
- **Protests for Zeros:** Plan peaceful protests or press conferences outside of legislators' offices to draw attention to Zeros' lack of support for retiree issues. Use props like a giant "Zero Award," and Alliance pro-Social Security and Medicare rally signs.

### Making It Impactful:

- **Personal Stories:** Encourage members to share personal testimonials during Hero events and protests, illustrating the real-life impact of legislative actions on retirees.
- **Visuals and Social Media:** Use creative visuals and hashtags to increase visibility. Live-tweet events, share photos, and stream live videos to engage a wider audience.
- **Follow-up:** After events, send thank you notes to participants and press contacts. For Hero events, include a photo of the award presentation. For Zero protests, summarize the key messages and public response.





## 2024 Winter Legislative Toolkit Personal Storytelling Guide

### Personal Storytelling is one of the most Powerful Tools for Change

It conveys why action is needed and inspires others to join us. Personal stories get the attention of the media and can convince elected officials to act.

### Why Do We Need Stories?

- Social Security and Medicare are under attack. We need to hear from retirees who depend on these crucial earned benefits programs about how cuts would affect their retirements.
- Pharmaceutical corporations spend millions to convince policymakers that the status quo is fine. Stories of how high drug prices are hurting retirees is our best way to fight back.
- We want to highlight the prescription drug provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act. Stories from retirees who are seeing reduced costs for their insulin and free vaccines show that this important legislation is making a big difference in the lives of real Americans.

### How Can You Use Your Story?

- Share during congressional district and state capitol lobby visits
- Speaking at press conferences and fulfilling TV, print and digital media requests
- Speaking at membership meetings, rallies, protests and direct actions

### Story Starters

- Has the cost of your insulin gone down thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act?
- Are you or a family struggling to pay for prescription medications? Will you benefit from the out-of-pocket caps beginning this year thanks to the IRA?
- What do you fear would happen to you or your family if Medicare were cut or you had to pay more for your coverage?
- Do you rely on Social Security to make ends meet? Could you have waited to collect Social Security until you were 70?



## 2024 Winter Legislative Toolkit Personal Storytelling Guide

- How would it affect your life if Social Security benefits were to increase by \$100 per month?
- How will you pay for long-term care if you or a relative needs it in the future?

### Ok, I Have a Story to Tell, What's Next?

**Write Your Story - it can be brief but you should try to answer the below questions.**

Hi, I'm \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_, from \_\_\_(place)\_\_\_.

I was \_\_\_(occupation) and retired in (year - if relevant).

I rely on my Social Security income to pay for \_\_\_\_\_.

I feel \_\_\_\_\_ about the retirement my Social Security helps provide.

If Congress cuts my earned Social Security benefits, it will affect me and/or my family in the following ways \_\_\_\_\_.

### Share your story with your state Alliance and the Alliance team in Washington.

- Submit your story to [retiredamericans.org/stories](https://retiredamericans.org/stories)
- Practice telling your story with a friend or fellow Alliance member.
- Ask for their feedback.
- Plan to share your story at a membership meeting, rally, or action.



## Debt Commission Letter to the Editor - #1

February 2024

Dear Editor:

Retirees need to know what is happening in Washington.

On his very first day as Speaker of the House, Mike Johnson threw his support behind a so-called "debt commission" to meet behind closed doors and create a plan to cut Social Security and Medicare.

The House Budget Committee recently approved three pieces of legislation that pave the way for cuts to these programs: **H.R. 5779**, **H.R. 6952**, and **H.R. 6957** will all turn this dangerous idea into a reality.

If those bills become law, 16 people will be tasked with finding ways to cut the Social Security and Medicare benefits we've paid for.

If Rep/Sen. \_\_\_\_\_ cares about the future of Social Security or Medicare, **he/she** can show it by rejecting the commission scheme. Instead **he/she** should support legislation to make the wealthiest Americans contribute their fair share into Social Security and Medicare so everyone can receive the full benefits they earned for decades to come.

Sincerely,

Name

Address





## **Debt Commission is a Benefit Cut Letter to the Editor #2**

February 2024

Dear Editor:

House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) and senior U.S. senators are coming for the retirement benefits we have worked a lifetime to earn.

How? By trying to pass legislation to create a “debt commission” that is supposed to meet behind closed doors and come up with ways to cut Social Security.

Anything is on the table – raising the retirement age, cutting benefits for current or future retirees, even eliminating the program altogether.

The only thing that isn’t on the table is the best idea of all – asking the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share. Today millionaires pay a lower percentage of their income into Social Security than a person who earns the minimum wage – that’s ridiculous.

I’m calling on Rep./Sen. [REDACTED] to vote against any commission or scheme that will cut the Social Security benefits I worked more than 50 years to earn!

Sincerely,

Name

Address



### Debt Commission is a Benefit Cut Letter to the Editor #3

February 2024

Dear Editor:

Did Senator [redacted] think we wouldn't notice that he/she is a co-sponsor of legislation that puts us on the fast track to cutting our hard earned Medicare and Social Security benefits?

The legislation is the Fiscal Stability Act, S. 3262, and it creates a "debt commission" to make recommendations on how to balance the budget.

That might sound harmless, but the devil is in the details. There would be only 16 people on this commission and public input is not required. The recommendations are going to be kept secret until after the next election – and then Congress would have to vote on the entire package immediately.

No debate. No amendments.

If Senator [redacted] wants to cut Social Security and Medicare, he/she should have the courage to introduce legislation and let the public know where he/she stands.

I am beyond disappointed that Sen. [redacted] would co-sponsor this legislation, which is such a betrayal and will not stop until all older [state]-ans know what Congress is doing to our retirement security.

Sincerely,

Name  
Address

# February 2024

January '24							March '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6						1	2
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
28	29	30	31				24	25	26	27	28	29	30
							31						




Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 Valentine's Day	15	16	17
18	19 President's Day	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	1	2
3	4	Notes				

- =House and Senate Recess
- =Senate Recess Only
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- Blue Text =Federal Holiday, National Offices Closed
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# March 2024

February '24							April '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3		1	2	3	4	5	6
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
25	26	27	28	29			28	29	30				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
25	26	27	28	29	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20	21	22	23 ACA Anniversary
24	25	26	27	28	29 Good Friday (National Office closed)	30
31 Easter	1	Notes				

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# April 2024

March '24							May '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2			1	2	3	4	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31	
31													

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Tax Day	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	Notes				

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# May 2024

## OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

April '24							June '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6							1
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
28	29	30					23	24	25	26	27	28	29
							30						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 Memorial Day	28	29	30	31	1
2	3					

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# June 2024

May '24							July '24							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
			1	2	3	4			1	2	3	4	5	6
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
26	27	28	29	30	31		28	29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 Juneteenth	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	Notes				

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# July 2024

June '24							August '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1					1	2	3
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
30													

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3	4 Independence Day	5 Independence Day Holiday (National Office closed)	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 59th Anniversary of Medicare & Medicaid	31	1	2	3
4	5	Notes				




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# August 2024

July '24							September '24							
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
28	29	30	31				29	30						

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 89th Anniversary of Social Security	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	Notes				

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# September 2024

August '24							October '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3			1	2	3	4	5
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	27	28	29	30	31		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Labor Day	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	Notes				

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# October 2024

September '24							November '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7						1	2
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
29	30						24	25	26	27	28	29	30

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14 Indigenous Peoples' Day	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	Notes				

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# November 2024

October '24							December '24						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
27	28	29	30	31			29	30	31				

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
3	4	5 Election Day	6	7	8	9
10	11 Veterans Day	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28 Thanksgiving Day	29 Thanksgiving Holiday (National Office closed)	30
1	2	Notes				

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# December 2024

November '24							January '25						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2			1	2	3	4	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31	

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26-27 Winter Recess (National Office closed)		28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
5	6	Notes				

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