



# FRIDAY ALERT



## Alliance for Retired Americans

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

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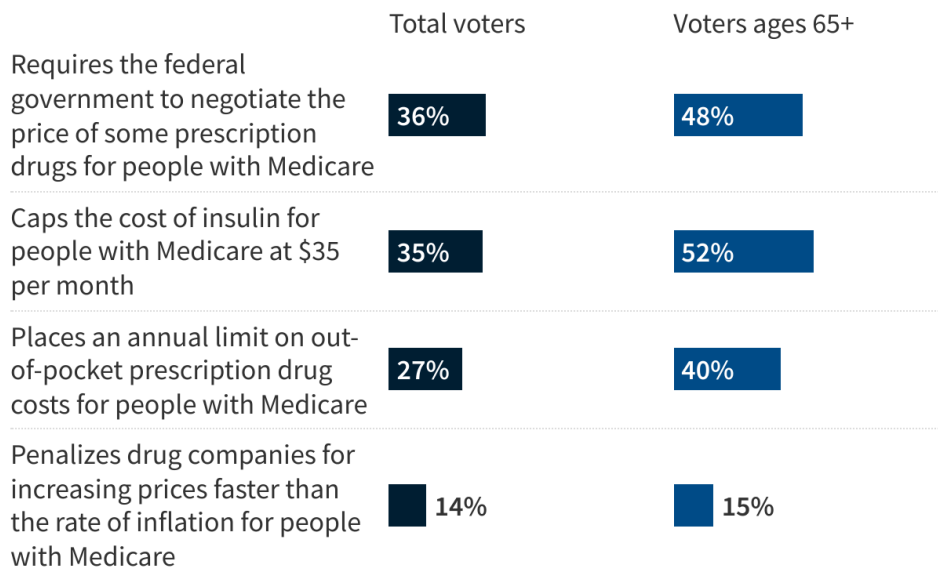
## Protect Our Care: 15 of the Biggest Drug Corporations Reported Nearly \$29 billion in Profits in Just the First Three Months of 2024

A [report](#) from Protect Our Care, released last week, found that 15 of the biggest drug companies reported nearly \$173 billion in revenue and nearly \$29 billion in profits in just the first three months of 2024. The ten drugs selected for Medicare’s first round of negotiations brought in \$16.5 billion of the revenue, contributing to \$25.4 billion in profits.

Figure 3

### Few Voters Are Aware of IRA Drug Pricing Provisions, but Awareness Is Higher Among Older Voters

Percent who say, as far as they know, there is a federal law in place that does each of the following:



Note: Among registered voters. See topline for full question wording.  
Source: KFF Health Tracking Poll (April 23-May 1, 2024)

Johnson and Johnson, which manufactures three of the ten drugs with lower prices being negotiated – Xarelto, Stelara, and Imbruvica – led the pack with \$21.4 billion in revenue and \$5.4 billion in net profits, while spending \$2.9 billion rewarding shareholders through dividend payments.

The Protect Our Care findings come as more than 1 in 3 Americans continue to cut pills or skip doses because they cannot afford their medication.

“These figures reflect astounding drug prices that enabled drug corporations to reward shareholders with massive profits, often at seniors’ expense,” said



**Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Fortunately President **Biden’s** Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will soon give Medicare the power to negotiate lower drug prices — saving Medicare, taxpayers and consumers millions.”

Under the [IRA](#), in 2026 the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) must negotiate the prices for 10 Medicare Part D drugs, and 15 in 2027. In 2028 HHS will negotiate the prices of 15 high priced drugs in Parts B and D, while in 2029 and thereafter, HHS will negotiate prices of 20 prescription drugs from Parts B and D.

## **Alliance Hosts Midwestern Regional Meeting in Michigan**

The Alliance hosted its Midwestern Regional meeting in Taylor, Michigan Wednesday and Thursday this week. Members from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin discussed the 2024 elections, collaborated on ways to build support for retiree issues including lowering drug prices and expanding Social Security, and brainstormed ideas for bringing younger workers into the retiree movement.

Alliance Secretary-Treasurer **Joseph Peters, Jr.** opened the meeting Wednesday and discussed President Biden’s historic accomplishments on behalf of seniors, including the Butch Lewis Act. He thanked the attendees for their role in delivering those results. **Rich Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance, talked about the upcoming election and the importance of the senior vote.

National AFGE Vice President **Jason Anderson** spoke about the importance of the upcoming election to the future of Social Security on Wednesday.



The meeting featured an intergenerational workshop.

On Thursday AFGE Council 220 President **Jessica Lapointe**, Wisconsin Alliance President **Ross Winklbauer**, and Wisconsin Alliance Executive Director **Alex Brower** gave a presentation about a series of demonstrations highlighting the need for increased Social Security Administration funding to meet the agency’s mission.

Members from Sub-region 1 also re-elected **Dick Long** (UAW) as a regional Alliance Executive Board member.

Registration is still open for the next [regional meetings](#) — the dates are: Western, June 5-6, 2024; Southern, June 11-12, 2024; and Northeast, July 30-31, 2024. Strengthen your skills as a retiree activist! Make sure you’re ready to help elect pro-retiree candidates this November and win the fight for retirement security. [Click here to find your region and register.](#)

All meeting attendees will participate in four interactive workshops with fellow retiree activists. For more information, please contact **Joni Jones** by calling 202-637-5377 or e-mail [AllianceConference@retiredamericans.org](mailto:AllianceConference@retiredamericans.org).



Left to right: Secretary-Treasurer Peters (at podium), Executive Director Fiesta and regional Alliance Executive Board member Long

### **Awareness of Inflation Reduction Act’s Drug Pricing Provisions is Gradually Rising**

A new [poll](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows that while most voters are unaware of the lower drug pricing provisions in the IRA, awareness is higher and has increased since November among older voters and among Democratic voters.

The poll [showed](#) that large shares of voters across party lines support Biden’s proposals to extend some of the IRA’s drug provisions to all adults with private insurance, including capping monthly costs for insulin and placing an annual limit on out-of-pocket prescription drug costs.

Voters regardless of political party are supportive of expanding the Medicare prescription drug price negotiation of the IRA to cover more drugs, with three-quarters saying additional drugs should be subject to price negotiations.

About 48 percent of older voters said they knew of a law that requires the federal government to negotiate the price of prescription drugs for Medicare enrollees.

The poll found 52 percent of older voters are aware of the IRA’s \$35 cap on insulin for people with Medicare, compared with 44 percent in November. Among all voters, only 35 percent said they were aware of the cap, which is still an increase from 28 percent in November.

“President Biden is gradually getting the credit he deserves for taking action on this serious problem,” said Secretary-Treasurer **Peters**. “Many politicians have tried to take on the powerful drug industry, but only Biden overcame unified Republican opposition to the effort to lower drug

prices. And he did it despite Big Pharma’s millions of dollars in lobbying, political contributions, and misleading ads.”

## **Superior Court Judge Sides With Arizona Alliance in Important Voting Rights Case**

On Tuesday, Maricopa County Superior Court Judge **Frank Moskowitz** [rejected](#) a Republican lawsuit challenging Arizona’s State Elections Procedures Manual (EPM). The Arizona Alliance and Voto Latino had urged the court to dismiss the case.

The plaintiffs, the Republican National Committee, the Republican Party of Arizona and the Yavapai County Republican Party, sought to have Arizona’s entire election procedures manual declared invalid, as well as many of its provisions. Among the complaints was an allegation that the period for public comment on the manual was too short.

The court rejected all of the plaintiffs’ claims [in full](#), upholding the validity of the 2023 EPM and dismissing the complaint in a very short (7 page) order. The judge concluded that Democratic Secretary of State **Adrian Fontes**, who had created the manual as the state’s chief election officer and who was targeted in the lawsuit, had complied with Arizona’s notice-and-comment requirements.

“The Election Procedures Manual will enable Arizona to count legal votes with increased accuracy and precision,” said Executive Director **Fiesta**. “The court agreed that the GOP arguments were without merit.”