



# 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)

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## Senator Sanders Introduces Landmark Bill to Expand Access to Dental Care

Senator **Bernie Sanders** (VT) has [introduced](#) legislation that would expand Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans' health benefits to provide dental care to more Americans. The bill would also increase the number of dentists and support staff in rural and under-served areas.



Insufficient dental care is an issue affecting tens of millions of Americans, including seniors with Medicare. One out of every five seniors in the U.S. is missing all of their natural teeth and many of them cannot afford dentures – which can cost thousands of dollars.

“Having bad teeth or poor teeth is a badge of poverty. It becomes a personal issue, a psychological issue, an economic issue as well,” [said](#) Sanders.

He added that spending money on dental care saves money elsewhere, since so much dental treatment is preventive. Spending on dental care frees up other funds for Medicare; for example, many people with chronic heart conditions suffer from

periodontal disease, and dental care covering periodontal disease would save as much as \$27.8 billion every year for Medicare patients.

“Dental care is health care,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “Medicare should absolutely include dental benefits for all beneficiaries.”

## Alliance Social Security Video Wins International Award

The Alliance [won](#) a 2024 Silver Telly Award for its short video, “Social Security — Our Earned Benefits.” Each year the Tellys receive more than 12,000 entries from around the world.

The [video](#) explains and corrects several common misconceptions about Social Security and describes the real benefits Social Security provides to millions of Americans, such as guaranteed payments for your entire life.

"The video is a great tool to educate and persuade Americans to strengthen and expand Social Security, not cut it," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "We encourage everyone to watch and share it with their friends, family and colleagues."

Watch the video [here](#).

## **Rick Scott to Seek GOP Leadership Role**

U.S. Sen. **Rick Scott** (FL) has [thrown his hat into the ring](#) to replace retiring Republican Senate Leader **Mitch McConnell** (KY). The first-term senator will face Senate Minority Whip **John Thune** (R-SD) and Sen. **John Cornyn** (R-TX), also a former whip.

Scott became a major factor in the 2022 election cycle with his so-called 11-point Rescue America Plan, which would have "sunset" all federal programs, including Social Security and Medicare. Sunsetting is a legal provision under which a program is automatically terminated at the end of a fixed period unless renewed by legislative action. The plan also included voter suppression proposals similar to those that several states have already enacted.

In a rare public [admonishment](#) of one of his top lieutenants in 2022, McConnell (KY) [rebuked](#) Scott's plan to sunset Social Security and Medicare within five years. Scott was then the chairman of the National Republican Senate Committee, which is in charge of developing Republican strategy and recruiting candidates to take back the Senate.

"The Rescue America Plan would have ended Social Security and Medicare as we know them," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "The fact that Sen. Scott wants to be the GOP's Senate Leader should serve as a reminder about what could happen to Social Security and Medicare if the GOP retakes the Senate after November's election."

## **Registration is Still Open for Three Alliance Regional Meetings; Las Vegas Meeting is Next Week**

Join us in Las Vegas, Orlando and Washington, D.C.!

Registration remains open for the next [regional meetings](#), hotel rates are still available — 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. **Attendees can pay onsite for the Western regional meeting.** [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).

## **Alliance Mourns the Death of Barbara Franklin**

**Barbara Franklin**, who served as president of the Illinois Alliance and AFSCME Retirees Subchapter 88, [passed away](#) on Saturday in Urbana, Illinois. She was 79.

Barbara retired from the University of Illinois in 2000 after more than 35 years of employment at the College of Education, serving as secretary to the dean of the Department of Educational



Policy Studies. During her time at the university, she was instrumental in forming the AFSCME union for clerical workers.

“Barbara dedicated her life to politics and social justice. She was not only a devoted state president for the Illinois Alliance, she was also a caring person who leaves behind many friends,” said Executive Director **Fiesta**. “She will be missed but never forgotten.”

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The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national grassroots advocacy organization with 4.4 million members fighting for retirement security for all Americans. [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org) @activeretirees