



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Social Security Administration Rolls Back Plan to End Telephone Service for People with Disabilities After Criticism

On Wednesday, the Social Security Administration [partially reversed its plan](#) to eliminate telephone services and implement an online identity verification system. People applying for disability benefits will still be able to apply for benefits and verify their identity over the telephone. People applying for retirement or survivor benefits, however, will still be required to apply for benefits and verify their identity online or in person starting April 15, 2025.

“We are grateful that SSA officials listened to the Alliance and partially addressed our concerns about their plan to eliminate phone services for Americans who rely on them,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “This is another example of how effective advocacy can achieve results. Our members will never stop fighting to ensure Americans can access the Social Security benefits they have earned over a lifetime of work.”

Retirees Shouldn't Count on Frank Bisignano to Stop Musk's Destruction of the Social Security Administration

Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance, [issued the following statement](#) regarding Frank Bisignano's confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee on Tuesday:

“Retirees who tuned into **Frank Bisignano's** confirmation hearing hoping to hear that he planned on halting the chaos and destruction of the Social Security Administration caused by **Elon Musk's** DOGE team were left disappointed.

Mr. Bisignano refused to contradict Musk's claim that Social Security is a criminal Ponzi scheme or even acknowledge that a person whose benefit



claim takes 3 months longer to complete simply because of new DOGE-imposed changes had experienced a cut in the benefits they earned.

Mr. Bisignano knows a lot about processing payments and came across as a big fan of artificial intelligence in call centers. Unfortunately, he said nothing to assure older Americans that he gets the unique challenges technology presents to Social Security beneficiaries, who are older and have less access to or familiarity with technology.

We urge members of the Senate to reject his confirmation.”

Department of Health and Human Services Restructuring Threatens Critical Services for Older Americans; Administration Moves to Gut Collective Bargaining for Federal Workers

On Thursday, Secretary of Health and Human Services **Robert Kennedy, Jr.** [announced](#) a massive reorganization effort that includes cutting 10,000 staff members from the agency and dismantling the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

[Operating as a division](#) of HHS, the ACL funds services and invests in research to promote the health and well-being of older Americans and people with disabilities. It [helps](#) seniors stay in their homes, access medical care, and supports essential programs like Meals on Wheels and local senior centers.

It [also runs](#) the Administration on Aging (AoA), which was created to oversee community social service programs established by the Older Americans Act. The AoA partners with a network of federal, state, and local organizations to administer these programs, [which help](#) about 7 million seniors and their caregivers.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) [will face](#) the deepest cuts, with 3,500 workers terminated from the FDA, 2,400 from the CDC, and 1,200 from the NIH. About 300 staffers will be cut from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as well.

“The ACL offers a network of support that millions of older Americans use every day from senior centers to rides to home meal delivery to medical appointments,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Eliminating this division’s work will reduce efficiency and sends an alarming message to seniors and their families that they are on their own.”

Meanwhile, the president targeted federal workers across the federal government, signing an executive order that strips the fundamental right to unionize and collectively bargain for staff at more than 30 agencies. AFGE announced it will pursue legal action to block the executive order.

Alliance Members Mobilize Against Social Security Attacks

Alliance members across the country took action this week to speak out against the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) dismantling of the Social Security Administration. Yesterday, Florida Alliance members, including **Barbara DeVane**, [protested](#) outside Rep. **Neal Dunn's** (FL) office in Tallahassee to rally against looming Social Security cuts and demand that he take action to stop them.

Earlier in the week, Wisconsin Alliance President **Ross Winklbauer** [spoke about](#) **Frank Bisignano's** confirmation hearing and the importance of Social Security for seniors on the *Today Show*. New York State Alliance President **Barry Kaufmann** delivered remarks at a "Hands Off Social Security" rally in White Plains this past weekend, and the Texas Alliance turned out to support Environmental Protection Agency workers. Iowa Alliance President **Ken Sagar** joined the AFL-CIO for a Zoom Town Hall and Phone Bank.



The Alliance, together with AFGE, AFSCME, and AFT, led a virtual phone bank on Thursday and made hundreds of calls to raise awareness about threats to Social Security benefits. The next virtual phone bank will be April 11. Please stay tuned for registration details.