



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## Senate May Vote on Frank Bisignano's Confirmation as SSA Commissioner Next Week

The Senate may [vote](#) on the confirmation of **Frank Bisignano** as the next SSA Commissioner as soon as next week.

Concerns have emerged about his testimony before the Senate Finance Committee—specifically, allegations that he misled lawmakers about his ties to some DOGE employees at the SSA and his role in their hiring. A whistleblower from the SSA [has contradicted](#) his statements.

"I am disturbed that the majority is unwilling to exercise its own judgment and work on a bipartisan basis to verify whether a nominee lied to the Finance Committee," said Senator **Ron Wyden** (OR), ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee. "Social Security is too important to Americans to stand by and do nothing while the Senate's advice and consent role is thrown in the dustbin."

**Bisignano**, who has described himself as a "DOGE person," will take over SSA at a time when it is already under stress. **Elon Musk** and his DOGE team have cut the workforce by more than 10%, announced plans to close 47 regional and local offices, and eliminated phone services for millions of beneficiaries and their families.

"We cannot afford to have an SSA Commissioner who may have lied under oath or who supports an agenda that weakens the Social Security Administration," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "We urge you to contact your Senator today and tell them to oppose Bisignano's confirmation."

**Take Action:** [Click HERE to send a message to your senators now.](#)

## HHS Layoffs Threaten Meals on Wheels and Other Vital Aging and Disability Programs

Sweeping layoffs this week at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are [endangering](#) critical programs for older adults and people with disabilities according to aging advocates.

HHS cut at least 40% of staff at the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the agency responsible for coordinating federal aging and disability policy. ACL funds thousands of local senior centers and supports programs like Meals on Wheels, which deliver 216 million meals annually to seniors and individuals with disabilities.

The layoffs also eliminated the entire staff of the HHS Division of Energy Assistance—about 20 employees—who managed the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). This program helps 5.9 million households afford heating and cooling costs, with nearly 30% of recipients aged 60 or older.

**Andrew Germain**, a former LIHEAP staff member, told *NPR* that the program provides "life-saving services," such as helping low-income individuals who rely on oxygen generators and other medical devices pay their electric bills.

"These layoffs are cruel and put the health and safety of millions of seniors and people with disabilities at risk," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The programs these individuals worked on are important and the spending was authorized by Congress. Congress must demand that the Administration continue to get assistance to the people who rely on it."

## House Democrats Hold Hearing on Social Security Threats

The House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee [held a hearing](#) on Tuesday to address threats to Social Security benefits, including mass layoffs of staff, the closure of regional offices, and the elimination of phone services for certain beneficiaries.

Former Social Security Commissioner and Maryland Governor **Martin O'Malley** testified that recent changes at the Social Security Administration, implemented by **Elon Musk's** DOGE team, are causing irreparable harm to the earned benefits program. "I truly believe that the Musk-Trump co-presidency has already taken 90% of the actions necessary to cripple this agency," said **O'Malley**.



AFSCME retiree and Alliance member **Sue Conard** of Wisconsin shared how Social Security has shaped her life. "When I was three, my father passed away. For the next 15 years, Social Security survivor benefits allowed my family to survive and enabled me to stay in school and pursue a career as a public health nurse." **Conard** urged Congress to protect and strengthen Social Security for future generations.

"Nearly every American family has relied on Social Security's guaranteed benefits at some point in their lives," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "With the benefits we have earned under attack, it's time for all of us to share our own stories about Social Security to help ensure it's there for future generations."

## Senate Confirms Dr. Oz to Lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services

On Thursday, the U.S. Senate confirmed Dr. **Mehmet Oz** as the new Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) in a [53–45 party-line vote](#). Dr. **Oz**, a former heart surgeon and television personality, will now lead the agency responsible for providing health coverage to more than 160 million Americans through Medicare, Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program, and the Health Insurance Marketplace.

CMS employs 5,700 people who manage a \$1.5 trillion annual budget—accounting for 22% of all federal spending—and a substantial contractor workforce.

A longtime proponent of Medicare Advantage plans, Dr. **Oz** has invested over \$550,000 in UnitedHealth Group, the largest provider of such plans. During his confirmation hearing, he acknowledged that Medicare Advantage plans often cost more and have been linked to inefficiency and fraud. However, he did not propose any measures to address these issues and declined to commit to divesting from his pharmaceutical and healthcare investments.

“Affordable health care is key to a secure retirement, and seniors earn their Medicare benefits over a lifetime of hard work,” said Executive Director **Fiesta**. “The Alliance will watch Dr. Oz’s actions closely and will continue fighting to ensure older Americans receive the quality health care they deserve, whether they rely on Medicare or Medicaid.”

### Take Action: Hands Off Our Social Security Rally This Weekend

Elon Musk and DOGE keep coming after Social Security. But this weekend, we will have a chance to fight back.

Tomorrow, Saturday, April 5, “Hands Off” events will happen all across the country, in major cities and small towns. Join retirees, labor activists, and other allies to send a clear message: Hands off our earned benefits.



[Here's a link to find a rally near you.](#)

## KFF Health News: ‘If They Cut Too Much, People Will Die’: Health Coalition Pushes GOP on Medicaid Funding

By Christine Mai-Duc

Tina Ewing-Wilson remembers the last time major Medicaid cuts slashed her budget.

In the late 2000s, during the Great Recession, the pot of money she and other Medi-Cal recipients depend on to keep them out of costly residential care homes shrank.

The only way she could afford help was to offer room and board to a series of live-in caregivers who she said abused alcohol and drugs and eventually subjected her to financial abuse. She vowed to never rely on live-in care again.

Now the 58-year-old Republican from the Inland Empire is worried [Medicaid cuts](#) being mulled by her party in Washington could force her into another vulnerable spot.

“If they reduce my budget, that doesn’t change the fact that I need 24-hour care,” said Ewing-Wilson, who has struggled with seizures and developmental disabilities her entire life. “If they cut it too much, people will die or they’ll lose their freedoms.”

Similar stories have already surfaced in GOP-held swing districts nationwide where activists have been applying political pressure to sway vulnerable House members from supporting \$880 billion in cuts that health experts say would almost certainly hit safety net programs. But in California, which sends more Republicans to Congress than any state west of Texas, consumer groups and health industry giants are joining forces in a quieter campaign to lobby lawmakers in solidly red districts, some of which they say would be [disproportionately affected](#) if those cuts materialize.

[Read more here.](#)