



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Senate Confirms Frank Bisignano as SSA Commissioner Despite Controversy Over His DOGE Connections, Lack of Relevant Experience

The Senate [confirmed](#) **Frank Bisignano** to head the Social Security Administration (SSA) along party lines on Tuesday, with a 53-47 vote. His term – set to expire in January 2031 – coincides with a tumultuous period for the agency, as **Elon Musk** and operatives from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) work to gain access to Americans' most personal information and possibly dismantle the agency.

“Mr. **Bisignano**’s testimony before the Senate, along with his long career in the finance and tech sectors, provides no reassurance that he understands — let alone prioritizes — the needs of older and disabled Americans,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance, [in a statement](#). “We remain alarmed by the risk that he will support privatization schemes or replace essential SSA workers with AI systems, which could undermine the quality and accessibility of services.”

The evening before the vote, the Alliance joined Senate Minority Leader **Chuck Schumer** (NY), Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** (MD), Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** (MA), Sen. **Ron Wyden** (OR), Rep. **John Larson** (CT), former Social Security Commissioner **Martin O'Malley**, AFT President **Randi Weingarten**, Social Security Works President **Nancy Altman**, and retirees and members of AFSCME and AFT for a “Hands Off Social Security” rally.



Maryland Alliance member **Pam Parker** spoke at the event, criticizing DOGE’s efforts to dismantle the SSA: “Let me be clear: This isn’t about efficiency, this isn’t about preventing fraud, this is about making it harder for seniors and people with disabilities to access the benefits they’ve earned,” said Parker. “This is nothing less than a cruel, calculated plan to weaken Social Security.”

Alliance members sent nearly 15,000 letters to their Senators urging them to vote no on **Bisignano's** confirmation.

"We will continue watching to see what Mr. **Bisignano** does next," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Our members won't stop speaking out and demanding that the Social Security Administration put the needs of retirees first."

Alliance Protects Voting Rights With Key Victory in North Carolina

North Carolina state Supreme Court candidate **Jefferson Griffin** [conceded](#) his loss to Justice **Alison Riggs** on Wednesday, ending a lengthy fight in which he attempted to void 60,000 ballots with allegedly incomplete registration information as well as thousands of ballots cast by military and overseas voters.

The North Carolina Alliance [intervened](#) in a lawsuit over the last several months to defend votes that were legally counted in the election. North Carolina Alliance President **Bill Dworkin** was also an intervenor in the case. Griffin's concession effectively ended the lawsuit, ensuring that the ballots Griffin contested will be counted and Riggs will be sworn in.

"This victory is a major win for voters in North Carolina. Rules are set before elections – not after – for a reason," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "We will continue to fight attempts to suppress older Americans' votes across the nation whenever and wherever we see it."

Retirees Congratulate Jan Schakowsky on Exceptional Career in Congress

Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** (IL) [announced](#) on Monday that she will not seek another term in Congress. She has represented Illinois' 9th congressional district since 1999. Following the announcement, the Alliance [thanked](#) her for always fighting for seniors.

"Rep. **Schakowsky** has been a friend to Illinois seniors and the Alliance throughout her career. She has earned a lifetime pro-retiree score of 100 percent," said President **Roach**. "We're grateful for her work to strengthen and protect Social Security, spearheading various legislative efforts to bolster our guaranteed earned Social Security and Medicare benefits and fighting for lower drug prices."

"Rep. **Schakowsky** is a legend with a lifelong commitment to older Americans. Her decades of leadership have made life better for seniors and all Americans," added Executive Director **Fiesta**. "We are grateful for the unending passion she brought to Congress and wish her all the best."



Left: Illinois Alliance member Drunita Steward (left) and CFO Stephanie Collins (right) with Rep. Schakowsky; Right: Rep. Jan Schakowsky with Illinois Alliance member Bea Lumpkin at a Social Security anniversary celebration in 2024.

Alliance Marks Older Americans Month

Thursday, May 1 was the first day of Older Americans Month. Historically, this month commemorates older Americans and provides an opportunity for us to reflect on their contributions.

It can also be a time to reflect on the consequences of ageism. Research [indicates](#) that older Americans commonly experience stereotyping, prejudice, and age-based discrimination. Media portrayals often ignore seniors or depict them as unproductive, mentally impaired, or just generally weak, frail, or feeble.

Internalizing these stereotypes can [negatively affect](#) mental and physical well-being for older adults, leading to poorer health outcomes and [even degrading](#) seniors' ability to perform cognitive and physical tasks.

Fortunately, these harmful effects [can be alleviated](#) by fostering more positive attitudes around aging. Experts recommend that older people reframe the narratives that fuel aging by trying to reject negative stereotypes, finding meaning in projects that align with their values, staying socially active, and trying new activities or teaching skills to others.

KFF Health News: At Social Security, These Are the Days of the Living Dead **By Darius Tahir**

Rennie Glasgow, who has served 15 years at the Social Security Administration, is seeing something new on the job: dead people.

They're not really dead, of course. In four instances over the past few weeks, he told *KFF Health News*, his Schenectady, New York, office has seen people come in for whom "there is no

information on the record, just that they are dead.” So employees have to “resurrect” them — affirm that they’re living, so they can receive their benefits.

Revivals were “sporadic” before, and there’s been an uptick in such cases across upstate New York, said Glasgow. He is also an official with the American Federation of Government Employees, the union that represented 42,000 Social Security employees just before the start of President Donald Trump’s second term.

Martin O’Malley, who led the Social Security Administration toward the end of the Joe Biden administration, said in an interview that he had heard similar stories during a recent town hall in Racine, Wisconsin. “In that room of 200 people, two people raised their hands and said they each had a friend who was wrongly marked as deceased when they’re very much alive,” he said.

It’s more than just an inconvenience, because other institutions rely on Social Security numbers to do business, Glasgow said. Being declared dead “impacts their bank account. This impacts their insurance. This impacts their ability to work. This impacts their ability to get anything done in society.”

[Read more here.](#)