



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Senate Republicans Continue to Shape Budget Bill In Race to Meet July 4 Deadline

Senators continued working at a breakneck pace to put its stamp on President Trump's budget and tax plan passed by the House of Representatives. The version of the plan passed in the House of Representatives will slash \$490 billion from Medicare, \$715 billion from Medicaid, and \$290 billion from food assistance to pay for \$3.7 trillion in more tax cuts for the wealthy.

On Thursday, Senate Judiciary Chair **Chuck Grassley** [released text](#) for the committee's contributions to the Republican budget plan. The text includes language that would limit the power of preliminary injunctions and temporary restraining orders issued in federal court cases.

The Senate Finance Committee [is expected to release](#) its portion of the bill today or early next week. Sen. **Markwayne Mullin** (OK) suggested that the committee will opt to leave out provisions capping State and Local Taxes (SALT) as negotiations continue. The committee is [also debating](#) the specifics for scaling back the Inflation Reduction Act's clean energy tax credits. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee has not publicly released its portion related to cuts to Medicaid and Medicare.

Senate Democrats warned that Medicare and Medicaid cuts included in the budget plan will close hundreds of hospitals that serve rural Americans, [citing 338 rural hospitals](#) that are particularly at risk. [A new report](#) from the Center for American Progress also shows that the bill will increase health care costs for older Americans by thousands of dollars each year.

ACTION NEEDED: [Click here to tell your senators to vote against Republicans' destructive budget proposal when it comes to the floor.](#)

"Increasing costs and slashing Medicare, Medicaid, and food assistance for seniors to provide more tax cuts for the wealthy is extremely cruel," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "We will continue to mobilize our members to speak out against this cruel bill before the Senate vote."

HHS Secretary Robert F Kennedy, Jr. Replaces Expert Members of CDC Vaccine Panel

On Monday, HHS Secretary **Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.** [removed](#) all 17 members of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's immunization advisory committee. He [claimed](#) this "clean sweep" was necessary to improve public confidence in vaccine science but it has instead sparked major concerns about the future of the panel.

Kennedy then [named new ACIP panel members](#) who are staunch opponents of vaccines or have little to no experience with vaccine policy. New panel members include physician and biochemist **Robert Malone**, who has spread misinformation about the COVID vaccine; **Martin Kulldorff**, who encouraged lifting COVID lockdown restrictions before vaccines were available to Americans; and **Vicky Pebsworth**, who serves as a board member for the prominent anti-vaccine organization National Vaccine Information Center.

The Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices (ACIP) was created to provide expert, scientific advice to the CDC on who should receive vaccines and when. The CDC [sets](#) vaccination schedules based on ACIP's advice and private insurance plans, Medicare, and Medicaid are [required](#) to cover any vaccines the ACIP recommends.

The American Public Health Association and the Infectious Disease Society of America [denounced](#) the decision as well.

"Secretary Kennedy has not only reneged on his sworn promise not to replace ACIP members but he is ignoring decades of proven science," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "We should also be concerned about what this means for the nation's health."

Dangerous Fiscal Commission Legislation That Fast Tracks Social Security and Medicare Cuts Re-Introduced in House of Representatives

Rep. **Bill Huizenga** (MI) [introduced the](#) Fiscal Commission Act (H.R. 3289) last month, and it has already secured 28 bipartisan cosponsors. The legislation calls for establishing a 16-member "Fiscal Commission" consisting of twelve members of Congress and four "outside experts" appointed by congressional leaders.

The commission would make recommendations on how to balance the federal budget – including potential Social Security and Medicare cuts – and deliver them to Congress following the November 2026 elections. The commission would do its work behind closed doors and fast track its changes to the floor for an up or down vote. Members of Congress would not even be allowed to offer amendments and options to increase revenue, such as lifting the cap on income subject to Social Security or Medicare taxes.

"Social Security does not contribute one penny to the federal deficit," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "The Alliance strongly opposes this bill and any other legislation that

would cut Americans’ hard-earned, guaranteed benefits. We will be watching how this bill progresses in the House closely.”

Our retirement security is at risk. Stay up to date by [downloading the Alliance’s fact sheets](#) and spread the word with your friends and family members:



POSITION PAPER



Threats to Medicare in Budget Reconciliation Package

Alliance for Retired Americans Position

The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly opposes all proposals to cut Medicare in the Budget Reconciliation Bill, H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Retirees have earned their Medicare benefits over a lifetime of hard work, and the program's benefits ensure that older Americans receive the health care they deserve in retirement. Since 1965, Medicare has saved Americans at the nation's largest and most successful health insurance system. Today, Medicare provides health insurance for over 68 million Americans, including 61 million who are 65 years of age or older and over 7 million with disabilities under 65.

Across the Board Medicare Cuts

The tax cuts in H.R. 1 are so large that \$400 billion in cuts to Medicare over ten years will be triggered if business law. Subsidy "Pay as You Go" budget rules require large tax cuts to be offset by spending cuts elsewhere in the budget to avoid budget deficit increases.

All payments to hospitals, doctors, other health care providers, Medicare Advantage plans, and stand alone prescription drug plans would be reduced by 1% per year starting in 2027. [Details](#) of this rule would make it more difficult for beneficiaries to get the care they need at a price they can afford. In response, health care providers could begin to turn away Medicare beneficiaries or stop accepting Medicare altogether. Beneficiaries could also face higher co-pays for medical services and prescription drugs.

Barriers to Medicare for Low Income Beneficiaries

The partisan reconciliation bill, passed with only Republican votes, makes it harder for low income Medicare beneficiaries to access and pay for care. Medicare beneficiaries who are enrolled in Medicaid receive automatic eligibility for the [Lower Income Subsidy](#) (LIS) program, which substantially reduces their out of pocket Medicare Part D costs. Lower Medicaid enrollments resulting from the bill's deep funding cuts are expected to result in fewer low income Medicare beneficiaries receiving this subsidy.

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[Threats to Medicare in Budget Reconciliation Package](#)



POSITION PAPER



Debt Commission Legislation Fast Tracks Cuts to Social Security and Medicare

On May 8, 2025 Rep. Bill Huelskamp (R-Md.) introduced H.R. 2083, the Fiscal Commission Act with 28 original bipartisan cosponsors.

The legislation establishes a 16-member "Fiscal Commission" appointed by congressional leaders. Twelve members of the commission will be members of Congress and the other four would be "outside experts." It would make recommendations on how to balance the federal budget by addressing the growth of discretionary and direct spending and revenues, while improving the solvency of federal trust funds, including Social Security and Medicare, for at least 75 years. There is no requirement that the Commission's deliberations would be open to the public.

The Commission's recommendations would then be delivered to Congress immediately following the November 2026 elections, with the requirement that each chamber conduct an immediate up or down vote on the recommendations without any opportunity for changes or amendments. The legislation "locks in" cuts either the revenue increases.

Alliance Position


The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly opposes H.R. 2083 and any other legislation to create commissions or commissions to do the work of American elected representatives without input from the American people.

Retirees have earned their Social Security and Medicare benefits over a lifetime of work. The benefits ensure older Americans receive the health care they need, and provide income for more than 70 million Americans. These benefits are critical and should not be cut.


The Alliance urges Congress to strengthen the solvency of our nation's retirement programs and expand Social Security and Medicare benefits by making the wealthiest pay their fair share into these programs.

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[Debt Commission Legislation Fast Tracks Cuts to Social Security and Medicare](#)



FACT SHEET



Threats to Retirees in House Budget Reconciliation Package

On May 22, 2025, the House of Representatives narrowly passed H.R. 1 by a vote of [215-216](#). The bill cuts taxes for the wealthiest Americans and large corporations while slashing health care and food assistance that millions of everyday Americans rely on.

Alliance Position

H.R. 1 is a sweeping bill that will affect the health and finances of every American family.

The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly opposes this legislation and calls on the U.S. Senate to oppose it. For older Americans in particular, the Alliance is concerned that the bill's potential cuts to health care, food programs, and services like "Meals on Wheels" and caregiver support.

The bill threatens retirement security by:

Cutting Medicare

Medicare cuts of \$400 billion over 10 years would be automatically triggered because the tax cuts in the bill are so large, affecting all 65 million beneficiaries' earned health benefits. This is due to statutory "Pay as You Go" budget rules that require large tax cuts to be offset by spending cuts elsewhere in the budget to avoid budget deficit increases.

All payments to hospitals, doctors, other health care providers, Medicare Advantage plans, and stand alone prescription drug plans would be reduced by 1% per year starting in 2027. [Details](#) of this rule would make it more difficult for beneficiaries to get the care they need at a price they can afford. In response, some health care providers are likely to limit services to Medicare beneficiaries or stop accepting Medicare altogether. Beneficiaries could also face higher co-pays for medical services and prescription drugs.

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[Threats to Retirees in House Budget Reconciliation Package](#)

KFF Health News: As Cannabis Users Age, Health Risks Appear To Grow
By Paula Span

Benjamin Han, a geriatrician and addiction medicine specialist at the University of California-San Diego, tells his students a cautionary tale about a 76-year-old patient who, like many older people, struggled with insomnia.

“She had problems falling asleep, and she’d wake up in the middle of the night,” he said. “So her daughter brought her some sleep gummies” — edible cannabis candies.

“She tried a gummy after dinner and waited half an hour,” Han said.

Feeling no effects, she took another gummy, then one more — a total of four over several hours.

Han advises patients who are trying cannabis to “start low; go slow,” beginning with products that contain just 1 or 2.5 milligrams of tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, the psychoactive ingredient that many cannabis products contain. Each of the four gummies this patient took, however, contained 10 milligrams.

The woman started experiencing intense anxiety and heart palpitations. A young person might have shrugged off such symptoms, but this patient had high blood pressure and atrial fibrillation, a heart arrhythmia. Frightened, she went to an emergency room.

Lab tests and a cardiac work-up determined the woman wasn’t having a heart attack, and the staff sent her home. Her only lingering symptom was embarrassment, Han said. But what if she’d grown dizzy or lightheaded and was hurt in a fall? He said he has had patients injured in falls or while driving after using cannabis. What if the cannabis had interacted with the prescription drugs she took?

“As a geriatrician, it gives me pause,” Han said. “Our brains are more sensitive to psychoactive substances as we age.”

Thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia now allow cannabis use for medical reasons, and in 24 of those states, as well as the district, recreational use is also legal. As older adults’ use climbs, “the benefits are still unclear,” Han said. “But we’re seeing more evidence of potential harms.”

[Read more here.](#)