



# FRIDAY ALERT



**Alliance for Retired Americans**

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## **Bessent Reveals Trump Accounts are a “Backdoor” to Privatizing Social Security**

### ***Treasury Secretary Says Trump Accounts Could Pave Way to Privatizing Social Security***

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent's comments about the safety net program ventured onto the so-called third rail of American politics.

On Wednesday, Treasury Secretary **Scott Bessent** [said](#) that “Trump Accounts” created by the Republican budget bill are a “backdoor for privatizing Social Security,” [claiming](#) they could eventually supplement or even replace the earned benefits. He later attempted to [backtrack](#) in a post on X, saying that the Administration is dedicated to protecting the program.

The private investment accounts will allow the federal government to [provide](#) \$1,000 to babies born between 2025 and 2028. Parents would be able to [contribute](#) additional funding and would have to invest the money in stock funds.

Privatizing Social Security would put Americans' guaranteed benefits at risk at a time when seniors are heavily reliant on them to make ends meet. [65 percent](#) of older Americans rely heavily on Social Security, up from 58 percent in 2010. The Administration has already taken multiple steps to weaken the earned benefit system, slashing the Social Security Administration workforce, making it harder for beneficiaries to file claims, and enacting a tax and budget plan that hastens the insolvency date of the Social Security Trust Fund by one year.

“Social Security isn't a handout. Americans work a lifetime to earn our modest benefits,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance, [in a statement](#) issued on Wednesday. “We will not let this or any administration cut or privatize Social Security without a fight.”

## **As Medicare and Medicaid Turn 60, Retirees Fight Against Attempts to Cut Them**

This Wednesday marked the 60th anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid, and Alliance members mobilized to protect the health care programs from the biggest threats they have faced since President Lyndon B. Johnson [signed](#) them into law in 1965.

[72 million Americans](#) are enrolled in Medicaid and more than [68 million](#) are enrolled in Medicare. The recently passed Republican budget and tax plan included \$930 billion in Medicaid cuts, which is likely to lead to the closure of more than 300 rural hospitals and one in four nursing homes across the country. It also included half a billion dollars in automatic, across the board cuts to Medicare.

Alliance members across the country marked the event with Protect Medicare and Medicaid rallies and press conferences. **William Spreter**, president of the central New York chapter of the New York State Alliance spoke during an event co-sponsored with Citizen Action last weekend. On Wednesday, the Nevada Alliance held a Protect Medicare rally in Reno and the Arizona Alliance executive director **Dora Vasquez** spoke at a news conference in Phoenix. The Illinois Alliance held four rallies on Wednesday, including a protest outside of Rep. **Darin LaHood's** (IL) district office and a Hands Off Medicaid event with Rep. **Eric Sorensen** (IL). More events are scheduled in the coming days.

“Before Medicare and Medicaid, only half the nation’s seniors had health insurance,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We must stop the disastrous impacts that will result from these cuts. Now is the time to urge lawmakers to protect these essential programs.”



Illinois Alliance members hold “Protect Medicaid” signs at a protest at Rep. LaHood’s office (top left); New York State Alliance members at their Medicare/Medicaid birthday event (middle); Ohio Alliance members holding signs at Medicare/Medicaid birthday event in Columbus (bottom left); Nevada Alliance rally in Reno on Wednesday (right)

## **Alliance Webinar Draws Attention to How Republicans' "One Big Beautiful Bill" Will Hurt Older Americans**

On Thursday, the Alliance hosted a special educational Zoom webinar entitled "The Ugly Truth About the 'One Big Beautiful Bill,'" outlining the harms created by the Republican budget bill and next steps for fighting back.

The bill gives more than \$4 trillion in tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans while increasing the federal deficit by more than \$3 trillion, triggering automatic cuts of \$490 billion from Medicare over the next ten years, weakening Medicare's ability to negotiate lower drug prices, gutting food assistance, and creating millions of job losses in the health care, agriculture, and clean energy manufacturing industries. It will also enact the largest Medicaid cut in history, endangering nursing home care, rural hospitals, and home and community based services like Meals on Wheels and senior centers.

"We need to continue to reach out and lobby and let people know what's going on and how all these cuts are going to impact Americans," said **David Simon**, Legislative Representative for the Alliance. "Statistics show that only 30 to 40 percent are even aware of this bill, so it's really important to go out and contact members of the media and Congress and make sure that people know what's happening."

[Click here to watch the recording.](#)

## **KFF Health News: Chronically Ill? In Kennedy's View, It Might Be Your Own Fault** **By Stephanie Armour**

On a recent weekday evening, Ashly Richards helped her 13-year-old son, Case, with homework. He did math problems and some reading, underscoring how much he's accomplished at his school for children with autism.

Richards has heard Trump administration officials suggest that food dyes and pediatric vaccines cause autism and ADHD. That stance, she said, unfairly blames parents.

"There's no evidence to support it," said Richards, 44, a marketing director in Richmond, Virginia. "As a parent, it's infuriating."

In their zeal to "Make America Healthy Again," Trump administration officials are making statements that some advocacy and medical groups say depict patients and the doctors who treat them as partly responsible for whatever ails them.

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