



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Alliance Members Demand Action to Protect Social Security on its 90th Anniversary

Alliance members continued to hold “Save Social Security” events with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and other labor allies this week to mark Social Security’s 90th anniversary this Thursday.

“For 90 years, Social Security has allowed millions of Americans to retire with dignity. It’s a sacred promise between them and their government,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We should be celebrating that legacy, but instead we have to worry about Social Security’s future. This Administration has slashed the Social Security Administration (SSA) workforce, spread disinformation about earned benefits, and talks openly about doing things to privatize and weaken Social Security, including raising the retirement age.”

Attendees urged lawmakers and SSA Commissioner **Frank Bisignano** to take action to address three key demands for keeping Social Security strong:

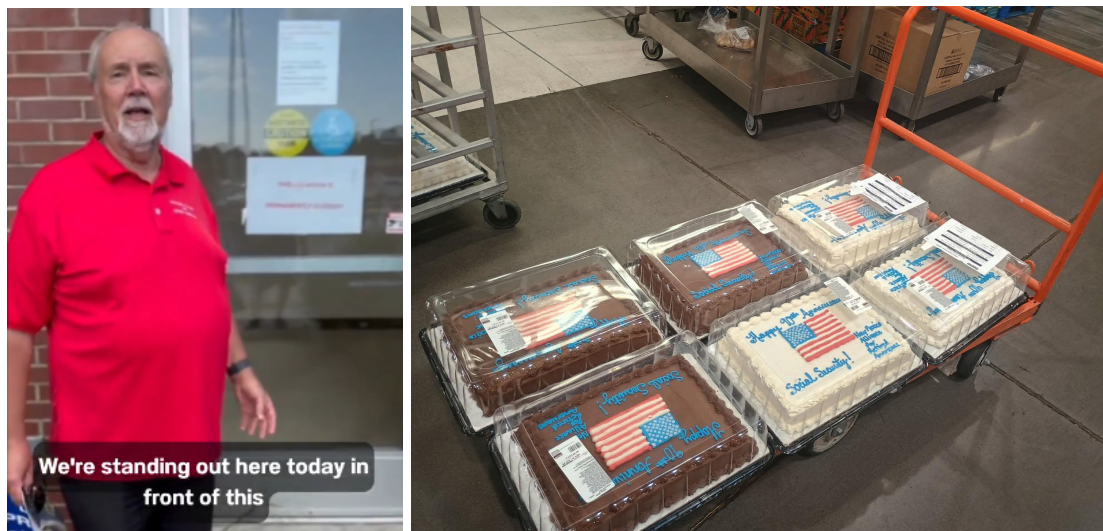
- Fully staff the Social Security Administration to reduce wait times and ensure high quality service delivered by professionals, not machines;
- Protect Americans’ private SSA data;
- Make the wealthy pay their fair share into Social Security so we can strengthen benefits for current and future generations.

The Texas Alliance kicked the week off with an event on Sunday in Corpus Christi, holding events later in the week in Houston, Beaumont, San Antonio, Dallas, and Austin. Rep. **Jasmine Crockett** (TX) received a “Retiree Hero” Award from members on Friday.

On Wednesday, Wisconsin Alliance members rallied in front of a recently closed SSA office in Racine. “We’re standing out here today in front of this Social Security office that has permanently closed. This location was so easy for people to go to. Right on the bus route, they could come here, get off right across the street and walk over here,” said **Ross Winklbauer**, President of the Wisconsin Alliance. “But unfortunately, because of the cuts that are going on in our government

right now and the attacks on our Social Security and Social Security offices, we're making it harder and harder for our seniors to be able to go and apply and collect Social Security."

The New Mexico Alliance commemorated Social Security's anniversary with cake deliveries at nine senior centers in Albuquerque.



Left: Wisconsin Alliance President Ross Winklbauer outside a recently closed SSA office in Racine; Right: New Mexico Alliance members delivered cakes and materials to senior centers across state.

Alliance members were particularly active on Thursday, attending and hosting Social Security events in 18 states, including California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, and Ohio.

The Pennsylvania Alliance joined the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the AFL-CIO "It's Better in a Union" Bus to start the day with a special "Keep Social Security Strong" breakfast in Wilkes-Barre.

The bus then took AFGE President **Everett Kelley** and Pennsylvania Alliance leader **Jody Weinreich** to a rally outside an SSA facility to highlight how this Administration's changes and staff cuts are hurting workers and Social Security beneficiaries.



"Across the country, we are using our voice — as workers, as parents, as people who care about our communities — to demand that this administration and Congress do whatever it takes to protect Social Security," AFGE President **Everett Kelley** said. "The American people deserve nothing less."



Pennsylvania Alliance member Jody Weinreich at "Keep Social Security Strong" rally in Wilkes-Barre.

"My benefits let me stay in my home, put food on the table, pay my bills, keep my car running, spend time with my loved ones, and volunteer in my community," said Weinreich. "What's happening at Social Security right now is a travesty. These are backdoor cuts to the benefits we earned. Let me be clear: Firing staff doesn't make Social Security more efficient. Making seniors wait longer for claims or answers doesn't prevent fraud. It just makes it harder for people to access their benefits."

The Arizona Alliance hosted "Silver Sit-ins," where they presented Rep. **David Schweikert** (AZ) and Rep. **Juan Ciscomani** (AZ) with "Retiree Zero" awards for their anti-retiree votes on key retirement security issues last year, while the Kentucky Alliance rewarded Rep. **Morgan McGarvey**'s (KY) pro-retiree voting score with a "Retiree Hero" award. The Florida Alliance also drew attention to their congressional delegation's voting record, presenting Sen. **Rick Scott** (FL) and Rep. **Neal Dunn** (FL) with "Retiree Zero" certificates.



The week's actions ended with a Social Security anniversary rally hosted by the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers. Alliance Executive Director **Richard Fiesta**, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Secretary-Treasurer **Fedrick Ingram**, Rep. **Chris DeLuzio** (PA) and Rep. **Summer Lee** (PA) all spoke during the event.

There are also several anniversary events planned for the coming days, including a protest outside Rep. **Tim Walberg**'s (MI) office in Niles, Michigan on Monday.

Courts Uphold Medicare Drug Price Negotiation, Marking Major Victories Against the Pharmaceutical Industry

Last week, three federal courts [denied](#) the pharmaceutical industry's latest attempt to overturn the Medicare drug price negotiation law.

On August 6, the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals [found](#) that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce did not have standing to challenge Medicare drug price negotiation, upholding a lower court's dismissal last year. Two other courts [upheld](#) the Medicare drug price negotiation law's constitutionality the following day.

The Alliance and allies worked for more than 20 years to pass a law requiring Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices for seniors and taxpayers with drug corporations. That advocacy paid off when President **Joe Biden** signed the Inflation Reduction Act – which enacted Medicare drug price negotiation – into law on August 16, 2022.

The 2nd District Court of Appeals in Connecticut [rebuffed](#) pharmaceutical corporation Boehringer Ingelheim's argument that Medicare drug price negotiation violates its first and fifth amendment rights, saying: "Participation in the Negotiation Program is voluntary and thus does not entail an unlawful deprivation of rights." In Texas, U.S. District Judge **David Alan Ezra** also [rejected](#) a case brought by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers (PhRMA), the Global Colon Cancer Association, and the National Infusion Center Association, maintaining that drug price negotiation is constitutional.

"These are significant wins for the [9 million](#) Medicare beneficiaries who will see lower drug prices this year alone, thanks to drug price negotiation," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The courts have shown that we have a fighting chance to protect consumers and make prescription drugs more affordable, despite how much money and effort the pharmaceutical industry is investing to lock in sky high prices."

New Social Security FAQ Highlights Program's Efficiency and Popularity

Social Security is popular, efficient, and sustainable, according to [a new "Social Security FAQ"](#) from the Economic Policy Institute.

The FAQ covers three main topics: what Social Security is and how it's financed, what Social Security benefits people receive, and why Social Security is facing a funding shortfall. Additionally, it debunks anti-Social Security talking points, makes the case for how Social Security provides a good return on investment for beneficiaries, and discusses how earned benefits are structured to be fair to workers of color, women, low-income workers, and younger workers.

The FAQ page also underscores the fact that the majority of Americans want to address the Social Security funding shortfall by making the wealthy pay their fair share into the system.

“With attacks to our earned benefits from every direction, we need to get accurate, fact-based information about Social Security like this FAQ into every retirees’ hands,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Alliance Field Director Briefs Union Retirees on Threats to Retirement Security and Ways to Take Action

Last week, Field Mobilization Director **Maureen Dunn** spoke to the Communication Workers of America (CWA) Retired Members Council at the 80th CWA Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She briefed CWA retirees on the Alliance’s organizing efforts, discussed the latest threats to retirement security, and outlined ways to take action to protect earned benefits.

KFF Health News: Experts Say Rural Emergency Rooms Are Increasingly Run Without Doctors **By Arielle Zionts**

EKALAKA, Mont. — There was no doctor on-site when a patient arrived in early June at the emergency room in the small hospital at the intersection of two dirt roads in this town of 400 residents.

There never is.

Dahl Memorial’s three-bed emergency department — a two-hour drive from the closest hospital with more advanced services — instead depends on physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Physician assistant Carla Dowdy realized the patient needed treatment beyond what the ER could provide, even if it had had a doctor. So, she made a call for a medical plane to fly the patient to treatment at Montana’s most advanced hospital. Dowdy also called out medications and doses needed to stabilize the patient as a paramedic and nurses administered the drugs, inserted IV lines, and measured vital signs.

Emergency medicine researchers and providers believe ERs, especially in rural areas, increasingly operate with few or no physicians amid a nationwide shortage of doctors.

[Read more here.](#)