



FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

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Members of Congress Demand Details Amid Revelations that DOGE Improperly Handled and Accessed SSA Data

Senate Finance Committee Chairman **Mike Crapo** (ID) and Ranking Member **Ron Wyden** (OR) [sent a letter](#) Tuesday to Social Security Administration (SSA) Commissioner **Frank Bisignano** requesting more information about the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) handling of Americans' personal data held by the SSA. They are also requiring a full briefing and responses to written questions from Commissioner Bisignano by February 10.

Senators submitted the letter after the Department of Justice (DOJ) [admitted](#) to making multiple misrepresentations and inaccuracies to federal courts in a filing submitted last week. The filing concerned a case brought by the Alliance, AFSCME, and AFT in February 2025 challenging DOGE's access to SSA data.

"We are grateful to the lawmakers who are taking these violations seriously and demanding transparency from SSA Commissioner Bisignano," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Americans deserve to know what happened to their private information, who had access to it, and what it was used for – especially where it concerns the Social Security benefits they have earned through a lifetime of hard work."

Alliance Launches "Stop the Scam" Campaign With Educational Webinar

The Alliance kicked off its new public education campaign to combat scams powered by artificial intelligence (AI) with a webinar entitled "Stop the Scam Campaign: Protecting Older Adults from Social Media and AI-Driven Fraud," on Thursday. The Federal Trade Commission says that older Americans lost \$4.8 billion from internet scams in 2024 and social media was the leading contact method for fraud affecting people over the age of 60.

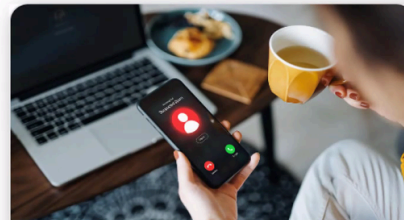
"A secure retirement is becoming harder to attain, and the proliferation of new, more sophisticated scams—powered by artificial intelligence and distributed through social networks—is making it even harder," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "That's why we're proud to

kickoff our Stop the Scam campaign. Today is just the beginning. Throughout this year, we will reach out to older Americans to educate them about new twists on the scams we're all too familiar with."

Alliance consultant **Marissa Whitehouse**, and **Yosef Getachew**, senior policy counsel at [Reset Tech](#), explained how AI and social media intersect and supercharge scams targeting older Americans. The algorithms that push ads and content to social media users are leveraged by scammers to reach more potential victims and social media platforms are making money off ads placed by scammers. *Reuters* recently [reported](#) that internal Meta (which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp) documents say the corporation made \$1.4 billion from ads placed by scammers. Whitehouse and Getachew also shared examples of some of the most common scams aimed at older adults and ways consumers can protect themselves.

Online Fraud and Scams are Reaching Epic Levels

- FBI and FTC data show billions of dollars are lost annually to fraud
- Older Americans are disproportionately affected
 - FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center Report found that **older Americans reported \$4.8 billion in losses from internet scams in 2024 - +43%** from the prior year
 - Social media was the leading contact method for fraud affecting adults 60 and older, both in volume and in total dollars lost
- Underreporting of scam losses is common due to shame or embarrassment



© CBS News

FBI says online scams raked in record \$16.6 billion last year, up 33% from 2023

Apr 27, 2025

TAKE ACTION: A growing number of state legislators, governors, and attorneys general are trying to pass laws to protect consumers and regulate the use of AI.

However, Big Tech corporations are spending millions each month lobbying Congress to pre-empt any law regulating AI or holding them accountable for harms to consumers on tech platforms.

[Click here to tell your representatives not to stand in the way of protecting Americans. Urge them to oppose any legislation that pre-empts any state's ability to regulate artificial intelligence and crack down on AI-powered scams.](#)

If you missed the event, you can [watch the recording here](#) and learn more about the Stop the Scam! Campaign [here](#).

It's Time to Register for the Alliance's National Membership Meeting this April

The Alliance invites you to attend our National Membership Meeting in April at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Click here to register for the meeting.](#)

The event will kick off with a late afternoon welcome reception on Monday, April 27, and concludes by 12 PM on Thursday, April 30. Attendees will elect the Alliance's officers, participate in special workshops, learn about emerging issues and what's at stake in the 2026 elections, and ways to grow our retiree activism. They will also attend a special "Senior Prom Ball and Dinner" celebrating the Alliance's 25th anniversary.



The registration fee is \$150 and covers all meeting activities and most meals. The hotel rate is \$69 per night, plus tax, with no resort fee and free parking. Register [at this link](#). Hotel reservations must be made separately. To book your hotel room online, [visit this link](#) or call 888-696-2121. Be sure to use the code **ARA2626**. Please contact Joni Jones at jjones@retiredamericans.org or 888-373-6497 with any questions.

"This event will give our members the chance to connect in person, help chart our path forward, and prepare for the upcoming midterm elections," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "We're excited to see everyone in Las Vegas and celebrate our 25th anniversary."

Texas Alliance Holds Biennial Convention

Last week, Texas Alliance members held their state convention in Georgetown on Thursday and Friday. Field Mobilization Manager **Tommy McLaughlin** briefed attendees on key retirement security issues, discussed how the Alliance has pushed back on anti-retiree policies – including the Republican tax law, and outlined how to get pro-retiree candidates elected during the upcoming midterm elections.

Other speakers included **Delia Trevino**, a Social Security Administration employee in Temple, TX and representative from AFGE Council 220. Members re-elected **Gene Lantz** as President and **Jan Lance** as Secretary and they elected **Jan McDowell** as Treasurer.



Texas Alliance members with Field Manager Tommy McLaughlin (far right)

KFF Health News: Blurry Line Between Medical and Vision Insurance Leaves Patient With Unexpected Bill **By Tony Leys**

Barbara Tuszynski was concerned about her vision but confident in her insurance coverage when she went to an eye clinic last May.

The retiree, 70, was diagnosed with glaucoma in her right eye in 2019. She had a laser procedure to treat it in 2022, and she uses medicated drops in both eyes to prevent more damage. She is supposed to be checked regularly, she said.

During the May appointment, Tuszynski's optometrist examined her eyes and reassured her that the glaucoma had not worsened.

Tuszynski, who lives in central Wisconsin, had looked up beforehand whether the clinic in nearby Madison participated in her insurance plan. The insurer's website listed the optometrist's name with a green check mark and the words "in-network." She assumed that meant her policy would cover the appointment.

Then the bill came.

[Read more here.](#)