



FRIDAY ALERT

Alliance for Retired Americans

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Administration's Attempt to Shuffle SSA Employees Deepens Staffing Crisis

Since the Trump Administration cut nearly 7,000 workers from the Social Security Administration (SSA) last year, officials [have reassigned](#) a majority of employees to answering phones, even those who normally process benefits. But the move has only deepened the agency's customer service and staffing crises, according to [a new report](#) from *Government Executive*.

Workers say they only received three hours of instructional training before having to handle highly sensitive and complex customer service calls. In addition, employees who conduct in-person meetings with beneficiaries say they [are now required](#) to provide information about their appointments to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Meanwhile, unprocessed claims at processing centers and field offices continue to pile up. Every processing center has had a few staffers reassigned to phone duty, with one facility experiencing the loss of every benefit authorizer. Processing centers currently have a backlog of six million cases while field offices have a backlog of 12 million cases, according to the article.

"This is an outrageous situation. We have paid for and earned not just our Social Security benefits, but a functioning Social Security Administration. Americans need to be able to contact SSA in a timely manner and have their issues addressed by well trained and knowledgeable staff," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Instead, the Administration is making it impossible for dedicated SSA workers to provide efficient, quality customer service. We continue to urge Congress to pass legislation, including Rep. **John Larson's** (CT) bill, the Keeping Our Field Offices Open Act (H.R. 1876), to require a fully staffed SSA."

Senate Prepares to Vote on "SAVE America Act" Which Would Create Barriers to Voting for 90 Million Americans

A battle is brewing in the U.S. Senate over the "Save America Act," a Republican backed bill that requires all Americans to provide documentary proof of citizenship (e.g. a passport, birth certificate,

or naturalization papers) in person in order to register to vote, update their voter registration information, and cast a ballot.

[According to the Brennan Center for Justice](#), 21 million Americans don't have access to these documents. Half of all Americans don't have a passport, and three million don't have any proof of citizenship at all because their documents were destroyed, lost, or stolen.

In addition, voters would need to show photo identification with a name that matches provided documents, which would disenfranchise [69 million women](#) who have taken their spouse's name and therefore have a birth certificate that doesn't match their current legal name.

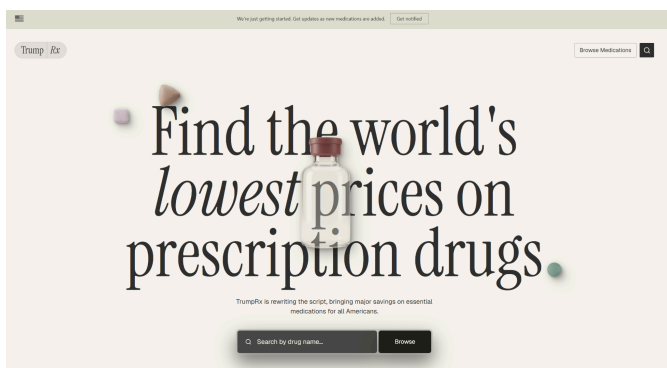
Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives [passed the](#) SAVE America Act, or SAVE 2.0 Act, with a tight 218-213 vote.

GOP leaders say [they have confirmed](#) that 50 Republican senators plan to vote "Yes" on the bill, but this is not enough to meet the 60 vote threshold required to overcome the Senate filibuster.

Senate Majority Leader **John Thune** (SD) plans to schedule a vote for next week but emphasizes that Republicans don't have the necessary support yet and he does not want to eliminate the filibuster in order to make things easier. Other Republicans, like Sen. **Mike Lee** (UT), are pushing for more aggressive tactics, including forcing Democrats to engage in a "talking filibuster" on the Senate floor to potentially overcome their opposition.

"This legislation is a thinly veiled attempt to make it harder for people to vote in the upcoming midterm elections," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "The Alliance is ready to fight this and any other efforts that introduce unnecessary obstacles that could prevent Americans from casting their ballots."

Trump Rx Website Will Yield Less Savings Than Administration Claims



Earlier this month, Administration officials [announced the launch of TrumpRx](#), a web platform that provides information about lower-priced direct-to-consumer (DTC) options for 43 prescription drugs.

The Administration claims that the platform will serve as a revolutionary breakthrough for consumers by offering more affordable health care, but [experts remain skeptical](#).

Consumers cannot purchase drugs on the website. It is a portal where someone can check if they can find a cheaper price by purchasing a drug directly from the manufacturer. Similar portals, such as Good Rx and Cost Plus Drugs, offer similar information for more drugs than Trump Rx.

“Americans are still paying too much for prescription drugs, and Trump Rx does nothing to get to the root cause of the problem,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Instead of telling consumers they are on their own, we need to expand Medicare’s ability to negotiate lower drug prices on behalf of seniors and all Americans.”

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

The Alliance invites you to attend our National Membership Meeting from April 27 to April 30 at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada.

[Click here to read the convention call and to register for the meeting.](#)



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 develop ways to grow our retiree activism. They will also attend a special “Senior Prom Ball and Dinner” celebrating the Alliance’s 25th anniversary.

Please contact Joni Jones at jjones@retiredamericans.org or 888-373-6497 with any questions.

The Alliance Joins the AFL-CIO in Celebrating Black History Month

Black workers have been and continue to be an essential part of the labor movement. This month, the AFL-CIO is drawing attention to vital contributions from Black organizers and labor leaders, including how they spurred the adoption of critical workplace and civil rights protections across the country.

Throughout the month, the AFL-CIO has highlighted these accomplishments in worker profiles posted on its [blog](#) and social media. Profiles for certain individuals are also on display in the lobby of the AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, D.C.

“Workers’ rights and civil rights are connected, so it’s absolutely crucial that we take time to remember Black workers and recognize their central role in the labor movement,” said President **Roach**.

KFF Health News: Red and Blue States Alike Want To Limit AI in Insurance. Trump Wants To Limit the States.

By Darius Tahir and Lauren Sausser

It’s the rare policy question that unites Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida and the Democratic-led Maryland government against President Donald Trump and Gov. Gavin Newsom of California: How should health insurers use AI?

Regulating artificial intelligence, especially its use by health insurers, is becoming a politically divisive topic, and it's scrambling traditional partisan lines.

Boosters, led by Trump, are not only pushing its integration into government, as in Medicare's experiment using AI in prior authorization, but also trying to stop others from building curbs and guardrails. A December executive order seeks to preempt most state efforts to govern AI, describing "a race with adversaries for supremacy" in a new "technological revolution."

"To win, United States AI companies must be free to innovate without cumbersome regulation," Trump's order said. "But excessive State regulation thwarts this imperative."

Across the nation, states are in revolt. At least four — Arizona, Maryland, Nebraska, and Texas — enacted legislation last year reining in the use of AI in health insurance. Two others, Illinois and California, enacted bills the year before.

[Read more here.](#)

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national grassroots advocacy organization with 4.4 million members fighting for retirement security for all Americans. www.retiredamericans.org @activeretirees