



# MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

800 Troy Schenectady Rd., Latham, NY 12110 | 518-783-6231 | [www.newyorkstateara.org](http://www.newyorkstateara.org)

October 7, 2024

## Capital District Chapter of NYSARA Holds Eye-Opening Senior and Labor Election Forum





The Capital District Chapter of NYSARA held an election forum at NYSUT Headquarters in Latham this week, focused on NYSARA and AFL-CIO issues, including Protecting Social Security, Medicare and Labor Rights which are all on the ballot in the 2024 election choices.

The program, which is part of a range of Election education and get out the vote efforts that NYSARA is supporting across the state at this time was eye-opening for participants.

NYS AFL-CIO Chief of Staff Ryan Delgado offered an overview of the key Labor Issues and the position and record of candidates from both political parties. At issue in this election are fundamental Labor rights and full participation in an economy that works for all.

NYSARA President Barry Kaufmann explained the myth and realities of Social Security and Medicare along with the positions and record of the Presidential Candidates and the New York Congressional delegation.

The program stressed the importance of voting in this year's election which is already underway along with talking with family, friends and neighbors in New York and other states about what is at stake.

## **2024 Early Voting in NYS is Already Underway, Make Your Plan for Participating Now**

Early Voting is already underway for the 2024 Election and New Yorkers have several options for casting their ballots.

Regular in-person Voting takes place on Tues. Nov. 5.

In addition to the option for casting absentee ballots for individuals who cannot make it to the polls on Election Nov. 5, you can alternately request an Early Vote by mail ballot to provide a convenient way to cast your ballot. Absentee and early Vote by Mail ballots can be mailed in or hand delivered to your county Board of Elections office.

There is also early voting between October 26 and November 3 at locations in each county for in-person early voting.

You can also cast an early ballot in person and submit it at your county Board of Elections office.

There's no excuse for failing to participate in this year's Election with so much at stake for Seniors and others in communities across this country. Make your plan now to cast your ballot for candidates who work for your interests.

Learn more about your options at: <https://elections.ny.gov/>

You should also contact your County Board of elections to learn more about specific voting places in your area.

**Capital District Chapter President, Karen Wojcik-Hess, Steps Down After Nearly a Decade in Post**



New York State  
Alliance  
of Retired  
Americans

In appreciation of dedicated service  
and leadership to the  
Capital District Chapter of NYSARA.

**KAREN WOLICK-HESS**

Best Wishes in your next chapter!

The Capital District Chapter of NYSARA celebrated chapter President Karen Wojick-Hess at this week's Senior and Labor election Forum, her final program as leader.

Wojick-Hess, a retired elementary school teacher in Schenectady, is moving to Florida to be closer to family and hopes to be active with the ARA there. She has served the Capital District Chapter of NYSARA well for more than 9 years, organizing regular programs and seeking to advance the interests of older New Yorkers through participation with many community activities.

She will long be remembered for her outstanding efforts to mark the annual anniversaries of Social Security and Medicare by distributing cupcakes at Tri-City Valley Cats Baseball games each August. Promoting the importance of Social Security and Medicare with the the public, especially young people, is a key priority of the national ARA and NYSARA. Cupcakes were served at the election forum in honor of her signature activity.

NYSARA President Barry Kaufmann and Executive Director Stephen Madarasz presented Wojick-Hess with a certificate of appreciation.

Jack Rohl of CSEA Capital Region Retirees Local 999 will assume the Chapter leadership, joining Rich Vale of the UAW.

### **Election Activism Opportunities**

**October 8, 9, 10 6:00 - 8:00 pm** - Virtual Phone Bank [mobilize.us/nysaflcio/event/701577/](https://mobilize.us/nysaflcio/event/701577/) to sign up.

Supporting CD 1- John Avion, CD 3 - Tom Suozzi, CD 4 - Laura Gillen, CD 17 - Mondaire Jones, CD 18 - Pat Ryan, CD 19 - Josh Riley and CD 22 - John Mannion

**October 10 NYC Labor Votes Solidarity Virtual phone bank Harris/Walz 5:30 - 8:00 pm**

[mobilize.us/nysaflcio/event/705346/](https://mobilize.us/nysaflcio/event/705346/) to sign up

**October 12 Labor Walk for John Mannion CNY Labor Council 10:00 - 1:00 pm**

[mobilize.us/nysaflcio/event/705785/](https://mobilize.us/nysaflcio/event/705785/)

### **Tracking Health Care Issues Ahead of the 2024 Election**

By Lindsey Copeland and our friends at Medicare Rights

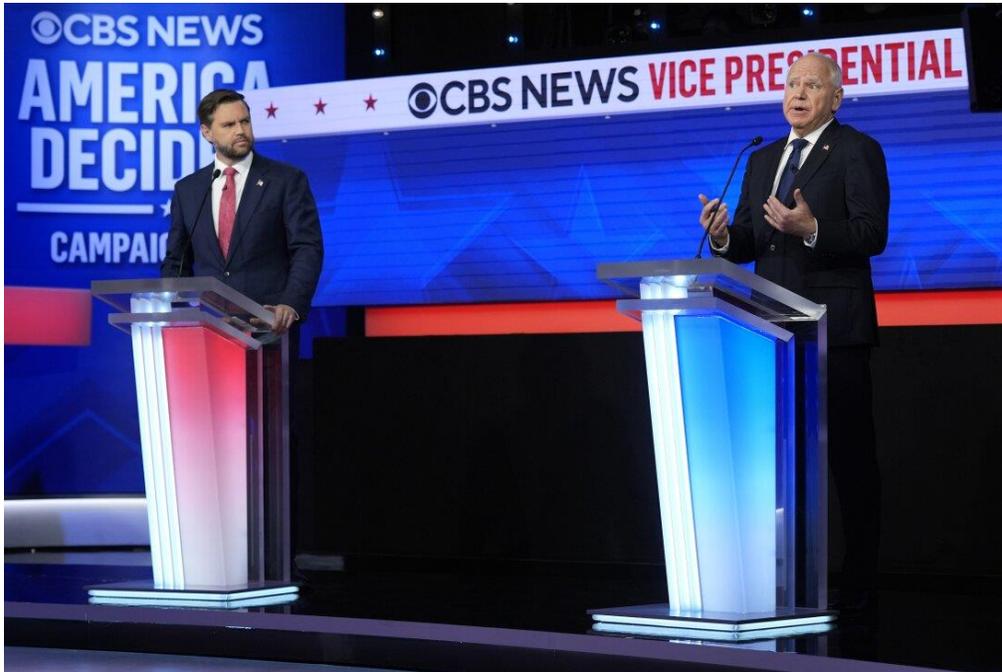
A new series of [KFF state snapshots](#) captures health care issues at the forefront of national, state, and local elections, providing state-specific context, data, and demographics.

KFF notes the state snapshots are intended to highlight timely topics and “describe the health care landscape in which policy debates in the election will unfold.” As such, they include information on health costs and coverage, focusing on the Affordable Care Act, Medicare and prescription drug coverage, Medicaid, and employer-sponsored insurance. The state tables are available [here](#). Another important KFF election-year tracker is a [side-by-side](#) examining the health care positions of Vice President Harris and former President Trump. The tool offers an overview of each candidate’s record along with their current positions and policy proposals. It covers key areas such as prescription drug prices, mental health, and long-term care. Like the state snapshots, it details issues related to foundational programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and the Affordable Care Act. KFF plans to update the [tracker](#) throughout the fall.

Both resources are available on KFF’s [2024 Election](#) page. [Read more about the KFF side-by-side.](#)

### **Vice Presidential Debate: Tim Walz Makes Clear That Kamala Harris is the Only Candidate Who Has Lowered Drug Prices and Made Health Care More Affordable**

When Vice presidential candidates **JD Vance** and **Tim Walz** faced off in New York Tuesday for their debate, Governor Walz took the opportunity to tout Vice President **Kamala Harris’** record on seniors’ issues.



"The debate proved that the health and well-being of older Americans is a priority for only one ticket: Kamala Harris and Tim Walz," [said](#) **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance.

"Throughout the debate Governor Walz spoke powerfully about the importance of ensuring Americans have quality health care that they can afford."

Walz reminded Americans of Vice President Harris' record of voting to protect people with pre-existing health conditions from being priced out of health insurance and lowering prescription drug prices for people with Medicare, including capping insulin prices at \$35 a month.

"Rather than talk about Donald Trump's actual record on these issues, Senator Vance outrageously tried to give **Donald Trump** credit for the Affordable Care Act's success and falsely claimed that Trump had lowered drug prices while in the White House," Fiesta noted.

Alliance President **Robert Roach, Jr.** stressed that older Americans face a stark choice in this year's presidential election.

"Alliance members are continuing to educate their friends, families and neighbors about what's at stake for seniors in this election and the [clear differences](#) between the two tickets," said **President Roach**. "We must elect Kamala Harris and Tim Walz President and Vice President for the sake of older Americans across the nation."

### **Retired Americans PAC Launches New Ad for Michigan's Close Senate Race**

Retired Americans PAC, the independent political arm of the Alliance, launched a [new \\$1 million digital ad](#) campaign this week across Michigan that draws attention to **Mike Rogers'** record of accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions from pharmaceutical corporations while [voting against lower drug prices for seniors](#). Rogers' opponent in the November 5th Senate election is Democrat **Elissa Slotkin**.

Rep. Slotkin, who currently represents Michigan's 7th Congressional District, [earned a 100% lifetime pro-retiree score](#) in the Alliance's Congressional Voting Record. In contrast, Mike Rogers, who served in Congress from 2001-2015, earned a dismal [7% lifetime pro-retiree score](#).



The 30-second spot is paid for by Retired Americans PAC and will be shown to persuadable older voters throughout the state. Twenty-four percent of the registered voters in Michigan are 65 years of age or older.

"It's clear that Mike Rogers would vote to raise drug prices for older Michiganders to protect drug corporation profits by repealing the law that requires Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices," said Fiesta, who is also Treasurer of Retired Americans PAC. "He even wrote a bill to make [opioids more widely available](#)."

"Older voters will play a critical role in this election," added Fiesta. "They need to know the facts so they can vote for the candidate who will protect their interests."

Additional independent expenditure campaigns are currently running in the following congressional districts:

- Arizona's 1st Congressional District - "[Crisis](#)"
- Arizona's 6th Congressional District - "[Sold Out](#)"
- Michigan's 7th Congressional District - "[Tom Barrett and Project 2025](#)"
- Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District - "[No Games](#)"
- Pennsylvania's 10th Congressional District - "[Game Show](#)"

### **Ohio Alliance President Challenges State Drop Box Restrictions for Voters with Disabilities**

Relatives and friends delivering ballots for voters with disabilities should be allowed to use drop boxes, according to a [lawsuit filed Friday by the Ohio Democratic Party and two voters](#), including Ohio Alliance president **Norm Wernet**.

The [lawsuit](#) challenges a [new directive](#) from Ohio Secretary of State **Frank LaRose** requiring those delivering ballots to sign a form inside a county board of elections office during operating hours. This prevents them from using drop boxes stationed outside county boards of elections.

LaRose's directive followed a federal judge's ruling in July that Ohio's election law violated the rights of people with disabilities by limiting who could drop off their ballots.

LaRose's office clarified last week that boards of elections were "highly encouraged" to create a drive-through ballot drop-off option, especially during high turnout times. According to the lawsuit, it is unlikely that the service will be offered 24 hours a day, since the drive-through option must be staffed by at least one Republican and one Democrat.

The suit contends that LaRose's rules violate state and federal laws and make it harder to vote.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs have asked the Ohio Supreme Court to order LaRose to rescind his directive. That would eliminate the form required for people dropping off ballots for others and allow designated ballot deliverers to use drop boxes.

"Absentee voters and their assistants face new hurdles to voting," wrote Ohio attorney **Don McTigue** and two lawyers with the Elias Law Group. "And all voters will be subjected to longer lines and wait times at their board of elections offices."

Mr. Wernet planned to deliver ballots for himself and his wife to the Franklin County Board of Elections dropbox. His wife has early-stage dementia and walking into the board of elections would be "taxing on his time and his health," he said.

The Ohio Supreme Court is composed of four Republican and three Democratic justices. According to the [Canton Repository](#), it's not yet clear when they will rule on this lawsuit. Early voting begins on October 8.

"The Alliance continues to fight voter suppression in many forms in states all across the country," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "There is nothing more important than ensuring all Americans' voices are heard at the ballot box."

### **Texas Retirees Rally to Encourage Voting Early**

Texas Alliance members rallied today to get out the vote and encourage voting early by mail, since Texas voters get their ballots a full month before the November 5 election. The event took place in Rowlett, a suburb of Dallas, days after a federal judge [struck down](#) a key provision of Texas's 2021 omnibus voter suppression legislation, Senate Bill 1. The judge found unconstitutional a provision that criminally restricted how paid canvassers can engage with voters in the presence of a mail-in ballot.

"A provision of SB1 would have prevented Texans from advocating for candidates in the presence of an absentee ballot," said **Gene Lantz**, President of the Texas Alliance. "However, the court's recent ruling declared that organizers and activists in Texas should be able to engage in activities like canvassing, voter assistance and get-out-the-vote efforts ahead of the November 5 general election without fear of criminal liability."