



MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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May 12, 2025

Save the Date.. Biennial NYSARA Election Convention

When: Thursday September 4, 2025 10:30 am - 3:00 pm

Where: NYSUT Office, 800 Troy Schenectady Rd. Latham, NY 12110

What to Expect: Representative of National ARA, NY Elected(s), Update on the state of play nationally and in NYS election of officers and installation of NYSARA Board of Directors.

Lunch and door prizes for those that stay till the end of the convention

Cost: \$15 for lunch which is subsidized by NYSARA

Did You Know.....

10 Million Americans Rely on Social Security for 90% of their income.

So...When Commerce Secretary Lutnick said "If Social Security payment were delayed only those committing fraud would complain because a fraudster always makes the loudest noise, screaming and yelling and complaining."

Well, if those ten million Americans had their Social Security delayed they would not be able to eat, pay rent or pay for medication or health care...

According to the AFL-CiO the Trump/DOGE Budget Cuts

In addition to the \$880 billion cut to Medicaid that helps the indigent, seniors, the disabled, children with polio and other serious conditions and funds a high percentage of rural and small town hospitals as well as teaching hospitals.

\$3.5 billion in cuts to the CDC (Center for Disease Control) - which is the primary agency of the US government responsible for public health through the control and prevention of infectious disease, injury and disability. as well as monitoring and approving all vaccines and insuring they are safe. The CDC prepares for and responds to health emergencies, including natural disasters, disease outbreaks (COVID 19) or a foodbourne illness outbreak and acts of terrorism.. It also does research to improve public health.

\$17 billion in cuts to the NIH (National Institute for Health) which is the primary agency of the US government dedicated to biomedical and public health research into diseases including but not limited to cancer, heart disease, dementia, alzheimers disease, diabetes etc. The NIH is the largest public funder of biomedical research in the world investing nearly \$48

billion annually both in its own facilities and in hospitals across the country and world wide.

\$ 774 million in cuts to Medicare and Medicaid program management. This has NOTHING to do with the actual programatic costs which are being cut by as much as \$880 billion over 10 years. What this is, is the people who enable these programs to deliver the services. So with these cuts it weakens the programs. Note: there are moderates in the House that have insisted they will not go along with these draconian cuts to Medicaid.

\$4.5 billion in cuts to K-12 education and Title 1

\$37 million in cuts to Veterans Affairs

\$1.6 billion in cuts to the Department of Labor that funds job training funds

\$2.49 billion in cuts to the IRS - This cuts personnel and prevents the government from collecting the taxes from those who choose not to file or use loopholes that are not legitimate. This costs government the funding it is entitled to by law and inordinately shields high income people from paying what they actually legally owe.

\$13 billion in cuts to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration which funds the Weather Service that provides daily weather forecasts, issues severe storm warnings (hurricanes, tornadoes and blizzards) before they occur so people can prepare. They do climate change tracking and manage ocean and coastal

zones as well as other issues of environmental and extinction of animals.

Statement on the Federal “Skinny Budget”: A Blueprint for Abandoning Older Americans

From Our Partners at LiveOn NY

Last week, the federal administration released its “skinny budget”—a plan that slashes non-defense discretionary spending by 23% and guts the very programs that older New Yorkers rely on to age safely and with dignity.

This comes on top of leaked documents revealing plans to eliminate Falls Prevention, Adult Protective Services, Health Promotion, Elder Abuse Support, and Respite for Caregivers - critical lifelines for individuals and families nationwide. These programs don’t just save lives, they save money by reducing hospitalizations, homelessness, and long-term care costs.

This is happening at a time when aging in the United States and New York, in particular, has never been more unaffordable. From skyrocketing housing costs and out-of-pocket healthcare expenses to long-term care gaps and inadequate food assistance, older New Yorkers are already stretched to the breaking point. And without federal partnership, the state and local governments will be left scrambling to patch massive holes in our aging infrastructure.

If enacted, this budget would:

- **Cut Seniors’ Health Care Through Medicaid**, through deep cuts to home and community based care.
- **Cut Food Assistance Through SNAP**, relied upon by thousands of older New Yorkers to make ends meet and afford food.

- **Reduce Access to Their Social Security Benefits** through deep cuts in staffing, leaving older New Yorkers to wait for hours on call lines just to be disconnected.
- **Slashing the HUD budget and dismantling Section 202 affordable housing** for seniors, handing it to state block grants with no guarantees or accountability.
- **Eliminate LIHEAP**, leaving thousands of older New Yorkers without heating and cooling assistance during extreme weather.
- **Zero out the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** program, cutting off critical support for senior centers, NORCs, and housing.
- **Eliminate Title V Senior Employment**, cutting off a vital re-entry path to the workforce for low-income older New Yorkers.
- **Abolish AmeriCorps Seniors**, ending programs that reduce isolation and support community engagement.
- **Jeopardize Alzheimer's Research**, which will have unprecedented consequences for the millions of families who face and will face this devastating disease.

This isn't just bad policy—it's un-American. We are witnessing the dismantling of the very systems that working New Yorkers have paid into and relied on for decades. Older adults across New York State deserve more than abandonment. They deserve respect, investment, and bold leadership that honors their lives—not a budget balanced on their backs.

New York City and State as well as our Congressional representatives must make clear how they will fight back—how they will protect the programs older New Yorkers depend on and stand up to these dangerous federal cuts. Silence is not an option when lives, livelihoods, and dignity are on the line.

Where Are we Now with Regard to the "Big Beautiful Bill (Budget)

The Republican majority is attempting to pass a budget through reconciliation. Reconciliation is a process that circumvents the Senate filibuster which demands a super majority (60 votes) to pass a bill and instead allows the budget to pass with a simple majority. In the Senate the Republicans have a 53-47 majority. Reconciliation is ONLY allowed on budget items NOT on policy items, which is why the lowering of the co pay for insulin was not permitted for people on private insurance while it was allowed for people on Medicare Part D.

In Reconciliation the House and Senate bills must be identical and they currently are not. Currently with the slim house and senate majorities the prospects of passage because of the severe Medicaid cuts for "moderate" Republicans and the increase in the deficit for the hard right Republicans.

Overall Status and Next Steps:

- The House aims to pass its version of the reconciliation bill this month, with the goal of sending it to the Senate by July 4th.
- Once the House passes its bill it goes to the Senate
- Given the differences in the budget resolutions and potential disagreements on policy, the details of the House bill are likely to change in the Senate.
- If the House and the Senate pass different versions, a conference committee would likely be formed to reconcile the differences between the two bills.
- The final bill would then need to be passed by both the Senate and the House before it can be signed into law by the President. This seems unlikely currently because of fears of "moderate" Republicans of not being re-elected

Key Points to Consider:

- **Immigration Enforcement** - The House bill currently proposes a substantial increase in funding for immigration enforcement which is a significant point of contention.
- **Healthcare Cuts** - Proposed cuts to Medicaid are a major area of concern and are causing divisions within the Republican party.
- **Federal Employee Benefits** - Changes to federal employee retirement contributions and benefits are also part of the House proposals.
- **Tax Cuts** - The reconciliation bill is expected to address the extension of tax cuts from the tax cuts and jobs act which disproportionately benefitted higher income persons and multinational corporations.

Senate Confirms Frank Bisignano as SSA Commissioner Despite Controversy Over His DOGE Connections, Lack of Relevant Experience

The Senate [confirmed](#) **Frank Bisignano** to head the Social Security Administration (SSA) along party lines on Tuesday, with a 53-47 vote. His term – set to expire in January 2031 – coincides with a tumultuous period for the agency, as **Elon Musk** and operatives from the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) work to gain access to Americans' most personal information and possibly dismantle the agency.

“Mr. **Bisignano**’s testimony before the Senate, along with his long career in the finance and tech sectors, provides no reassurance that he understands — let alone prioritizes — the needs of older and disabled Americans,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance, [in a statement](#). “We remain alarmed by the risk that he will support privatization schemes or replace essential SSA workers with AI systems, which could undermine the quality and accessibility of services.”

The evening before the vote, the Alliance joined Senate Minority Leader **Chuck Schumer** (NY), Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** (MD), Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** (MA), Sen. **Ron Wyden** (OR), Rep. **John Larson** (CT), former Social Security Commissioner Martin **O'Malley**, AFT President **Randi Weingarten**, Social Security Works President **Nancy Altman**, and retirees and members of AFSCME and AFT for a "Hands Off Social Security" rally.

seniors and people with disabilities to access the benefits they've earned," said Parker. "This is nothing less than a cruel, calculated plan to weaken Social Security."

Alliance members sent nearly 15,000 letters to their Senators urging them to vote no on **Bisignano's** confirmation.

"We will continue watching to see what Mr. **Bisignano** does next," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Our members won't stop speaking out and demanding that the Social Security Administration put the needs of retirees first."

Alliance Protects Voting Rights With Key Victory in North Carolina

North Carolina state Supreme Court candidate **Jefferson Griffin** [conceded](#) his loss to Justice Alison Riggs on Wednesday, ending a lengthy fight in which he attempted to void 60,000 ballots with allegedly incomplete registration information as well as thousands of ballots cast by military and overseas voters.

The North Carolina Alliance [intervened](#) in a lawsuit over the last several months to defend votes that were legally counted in the election. North Carolina Alliance President **Bill Dworkin** was also an intervenor in the case. Griffin's concession effectively ended the lawsuit, ensuring that the ballots Griffin contested will be counted and Riggs will be sworn in.

"This victory is a major win for voters in North Carolina. Rules are set before elections – not after – for a reason," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "We will continue to fight attempts to suppress older Americans' votes across the nation whenever and wherever we see it."

Retirees Congratulate Jan Schakowsky on Exceptional Career in Congress

Rep. **Jan Schakowsky** (IL) announced on Monday that she will not seek another term in Congress. She has represented Illinois' 9th congressional district since 1999. Following the announcement, the Alliance thanked her for always fighting for seniors.

"Rep. **Schakowsky** has been a friend to Illinois seniors and the Alliance throughout her career. She has earned a lifetime pro-retiree score of 100 percent," said President **Roach**. "We're grateful for her work to strengthen and protect Social Security, spearheading various legislative efforts to bolster our guaranteed earned Social Security and Medicare benefits and fighting for lower drug prices."

"Rep. Schakowsky is a legend with a lifelong commitment to older Americans. Her decades of leadership have made life better for seniors and all Americans," added Executive Director **Fiesta**. "We are grateful for the unending passion she brought to Congress and wish her all the best."



Left: Illinois Alliance member Drunita Steward (left) and CFO Stephanie Collins (right) with Rep. Schakowsky; Right: Rep. Jan Schakowsky with Illinois Alliance member Bea Lumpkin at a Social Security anniversary celebration in 2024.

Alliance Marks Older Americans Month

Thursday, May 1 was the first day of Older Americans Month. Historically, this month commemorates older Americans and provides an opportunity for us to reflect on their contributions.

It can also be a time to reflect on the consequences of ageism. Research [indicates](#) that older Americans commonly experience stereotyping, prejudice, and age-based discrimination. Media portrayals often ignore seniors or depict them as unproductive, mentally impaired, or just generally weak, frail, or feeble.

Internalizing these stereotypes can [negatively affect](#) mental and physical well-being for older adults, leading to poorer health outcomes and [even degrading](#) seniors' ability to perform cognitive and physical tasks.

Fortunately, these harmful effects [can be alleviated](#) by fostering more positive attitudes around aging. Experts recommend that older people reframe the narratives that fuel aging by trying to reject negative stereotypes, finding meaning in projects that align with their values, staying socially active, and trying new activities or teaching skills to others.

KFF Health News: At Social Security, These Are the Days of the Living Dead

By Darius Tahir

Rennie Glasgow, who has served 15 years at the Social Security Administration, is seeing something new on the job: dead people.

They're not really dead, of course. In four instances over the past few weeks, he told *KFF Health News*, his Schenectady, New York, office has seen people come in for whom "there is no information on the record, just that they are dead." So employees have to "resurrect" them — affirm that they're living, so they can receive their benefits.

Revivals were “sporadic” before, and there’s been an uptick in such cases across upstate New York, said Glasgow. He is also an official with the American Federation of Government Employees, the union that represented 42,000 Social Security employees just before the start of President Donald Trump’s second term.

Martin O’Malley, who led the Social Security Administration toward the end of the Joe Biden administration, said in an interview that he had heard similar stories during a recent town hall in Racine, Wisconsin. “In that room of 200 people, two people raised their hands and said they each had a friend who was wrongly marked as deceased when they’re very much alive,” he said.

It’s more than just an inconvenience, because other institutions rely on Social Security numbers to do business, Glasgow said. Being declared dead “impacts their bank account. This impacts their insurance. This impacts their ability to work. This impacts their ability to get anything done in society.”