



MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

800 Troy Schenectady Rd., Latham, NY 12110 | 518-783-6231 | www.newyorkstateara.org

June 30, 2025

Federal Update Week of June 22

Budget Reconciliation Bill: As of last week, the Senate parliamentarian ruled that several key provisions in the Republicans' domestic policy bill—including measures targeting state Medicaid funding strategies and student loan repayment options—cannot be included in the legislation as written. This decision jeopardizes major cost-saving components of the bill, prompting GOP leaders to scramble for alternatives ahead of President Trump's July 4 deadline for its passage. On Saturday, June 28 the Senate passed a procedural issue to allow the bill to go to a vote (51-49) with Rand Paul R/Kentucky and Thom Tillis (R/ North Carolina voting with the Democrats. President Trump has threatened to find a primary opponent against Tillis. Tentatively the vote on the bill itself will happen this week which sends the Senate bill (altered significantly from the House bill) back to the House. To do a reconciliation bill you need to have identical bills from House and Senate which could be problematic. **NYSARA members in Republican congressional districts need to contact their congress persons office to forcibly push back on this terrible bill. There is currently about \$1 trillion of Medicare cuts, cuts to SNAP (food stamps) and a dramatic almost \$4 trillion increase to the deficit. Talking point " How can you, Mr./Ms. Congress person give a massive tax break to millionaires, billionaires and multi national corporations while taking away healthcare, nutrition programs and senior services for working people and seniors?" You need to insist**

they vote against this horrible bill that hurts working people and seniors and will put a \$5.5 billion plus hole in our New York state budget.

See ongoing updates on [Politico's "Inside Congress Live" page](#).

Older Americans Act Reauthorization: Thanks to our collective advocacy, a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators has introduced legislation to reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA) through 2030, renewing and strengthening the federal programs that help older adults live with dignity and independence. The bill includes key improvements to support family caregivers, address workforce needs, and expand access to nutrition, transportation, in-home care, and other vital services.

Justice in Aging Factsheet: [**Work Requirements Would Cut Medicaid for Older Adults**](#)

Response to NYSARA Board Member Jim Carr About Medicaid Cuts and the Facts From Representative Nick Langworthy (R/23 CD)

The Claims

Dear Mr. Carr,

Thank you for contacting me to express your support for Medicaid. I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

Medicaid is a critical lifeline for millions of seniors, children, individuals with disabilities, and low-income families who have fallen on hard times—not just in New York, but across the country. I firmly support maintaining Medicaid benefits for those who truly need it. Particularly in our rural and underserved communities throughout Western New York and the Southern Tier, Medicaid plays a vital role in keeping hospitals and nursing homes open, doctors in practice, and patients healthy.

While I strongly support the mission and necessity of Medicaid, we must also acknowledge that the program is not immune to inefficiencies, waste, and fraud. To ensure the long-term viability of the program, it's our responsibility to ensure that every taxpayer dollar is being used wisely and reaching the people who genuinely need help. That's why I believe targeted reforms are essential to strengthen Medicaid for the long haul—by modernizing eligibility verification systems, increasing oversight, and rooting out fraud and abuse that cost the program billions annually. The core population Medicaid was designed to serve—pregnant women, children, people with disabilities and low-income seniors—has expanded exponentially, which has also contributed to exploding costs and I also believe that we can institute common sense measures like work-requirements for able-bodied adults under the age of 65 who don't have dependents. Work requirements on public welfare benefits that were instituted in the 90's under the Clinton Administration had tremendous success getting people into the workforce and started on the ladder back to self-sufficiency.

In these polarizing times, there has been a lot of dishonest rhetoric and misinformation about House Republicans' budget and our reconciliation process. **Our House Budget Resolution did not cut a single penny from Medicaid, Medicare or Social Security and both the President, the Speaker and I have said numerous times publicly that we will not cut benefits for those who truly need them.** As a Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over healthcare policy, I am proud to have a seat at the table as these important policy decisions are being discussed. Please know that I remain committed to expanding affordable and accessible quality healthcare for all Americans.

Once again, thank you for contacting me about this important issue. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any additional questions, comments, or concerns. **My door is always open, (except he will not schedule or attend any town halls or public meetings/ editors note)** and I am honored to serve Western New York and the Southern Tier in Washington.

The Facts...

In 2025, there are proposed cuts to Medicaid that could significantly impact healthcare coverage and spending. A key proposal involves reducing

the [federal matching rate](#) for the Medicaid expansion population, which could lead to millions losing coverage and states facing increased financial burdens. Additionally, there are discussions about limiting federal spending on Medicaid, potentially leading to further cuts in coverage and benefits.

Key details:

- **Federal Medicaid Cuts:**

The [House-passed budget reconciliation bill](#) includes a reduction of \$863 billion in federal Medicaid spending over ten years and in the Senate bill well over \$1 trillion.

- **Impact on Coverage:**

These cuts could result in millions losing Medicaid coverage, with estimates ranging from 5.5 million to 10.3 million people losing coverage, depending on the specific policy changes.

- **State Impact:**

States could face increased financial pressure to offset the federal cuts, potentially leading to cuts in state-funded programs, tax increases, or reductions in Medicaid benefits and coverage.

- **Medicaid Expansion:**

The Medicaid expansion, which provides coverage to low-income adults, is a key target for potential cuts. Reducing the federal matching rate for this population could unravel the expansion in some states.

- **Specific Policies:**

Potential policies include reducing the [federal matching rate for the expansion population](#), limiting federal spending on Medicaid, and capping federal spending for the expansion population.

- **Impact on Hospitals:**

Cuts to Medicaid could lead to increased uncompensated care costs for hospitals, potentially impacting their financial stability.

- **Timing:**

The budget reconciliation bill, including Medicaid cuts, was passed by the House and is now being considered by the Senate.

Medicare:

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that under the budget reconciliation, because of the almost \$4 trillion increase in the deficit, that the Pay as You Go act of 2010 would kick in leading to a mandatory \$500 billion cut to Medicare.

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand Details Risks for Seniors and All New Yorkers In Federal Budget Bill on NYS AFL-CIO Union Strong Podcast

The Federal Budget Bill currently before the Senate is being called One Big, Beautiful Bill by its supporters, but U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand calls it a Big, Beautiful Betrayal of working people.

On the latest episode of the Union Strong Podcast, Sen. Gillibrand discusses what is included in the bill, the impact the cuts would have on New Yorkers, and what you can do about it. She also discusses her efforts to support

seniors and an initiative that would make childbirth free for families with private insurance.

<https://nysaflcio.org/news/union-strong-episode-115-big-beautiful-betrayal>

Social Security Administration Quietly Removes Customer Service Data Before Commissioner Testifies

The Social Security Administration (SSA) stopped posting customer service performance metrics on its website, [according to a new report](#) from *The Washington Post*. The SSA website no longer has a “live data” section that shows current call wait times, callback wait times, and number of callers waiting on hold or waiting for a callback.



SSA Commissioner **Frank Bisignano** did not say why the agency removed this information or commit to restoring it when asked by Rep. **Judy Chu** (CA) during a hearing in the House Ways and Means Social Security and Work and Welfare Subcommittees on Wednesday.

Bisignano focused on his plan to use technology, including Artificial Intelligence, to “modernize” customer service at the agency, and insisted that he doesn’t need to increase staffing levels for those improvements. In February, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) implemented staffing reductions that [slashed](#) the SSA workforce by 12 percent, [wreaking](#)

[havoc at the agency](#) with slowed down claims processing times, increased wait times, and frequent website crashes.

Throughout the often combative hearing on Wednesday, **Bisignano** emphasized that he wants to use technology at the agency more while still “meeting people where they are” and providing “an omnichannel” approach.

But he failed to provide specifics about how he would ensure that rural Americans and seniors without broadband or smart phones continue to have access to customer service while the agency implements artificial intelligence (AI) and other modernization technologies. He did not provide a direct answer about whether AI would be used for eligibility determinations or redeterminations.

“These changes are not modernizing, they are marginalizing,” said Rep. **Terri Sewell** (AL). “In Black and Brown communities where generational poverty and digital exclusion remain high, seniors are now expected to navigate impersonal and inaccessible systems with little or no support.”

Committee members also asked about the Department of Government Efficiency’s (DOGE) reach in the Social Security Administration. **Bisignano** deflected questions about how much influence DOGE has within the agency, and he doubled down on misinformation originally spread by **Elon Musk**, the head of DOGE, refusing to refute his false claim that 120 year olds were collecting Social Security benefits.

“There’s an immediate urgency as it deals with DOGE and their access to the public’s personal data,” said Social Security Subcommittee Ranking Member **John Larson** (CT). “I also think that it’s become blatantly obvious to the American public that we are in the midst of the privatization of Social

Security. We have put forward a plan, the plan is very specific and direct. We see no plan, we've had no hearing from our colleagues on the other side."

"At a time when SSA is reeling from DOGE staffing cuts that resulted in the loss of thousands of employees, Mr. **Bisignano** provided no indications that he will prioritize or that he even understands what Social Security beneficiaries actually need when it comes to customer service," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "There is no substitute for experience and human interaction when it comes to ensuring that older and disabled Americans get the benefits they have earned. We will continue to work with Congressman **Larson** on this and other issues pertaining to Social Security and the SSA."

Senate Republicans Scramble to Pass Unpopular Budget Bill

Senate GOP leaders are forging ahead despite broad opposition to their "big, beautiful" budget bill. Nearly two-thirds of Americans view it unfavorably, [according to a new KFF poll](#).

Earlier in the week, 15 vulnerable House Republicans [sent a letter](#) to Senate Majority Leader **John Thune** (SD) stating that the Senate Finance Committee version "goes too far."

Political squabbling over the bill reached new levels during a closed door meeting Republican senators held Tuesday. Sen. **Thom Tillis** (NC) expressed worry that the plan's proposed Medicaid cuts could cause trouble for Republicans in the midterm elections to which Sen. **Mitch McConnell** (KY) [suggested that](#) Americans "will get over it."



Click picture to watch: Michigan Alliance President Jim Pedersen talks about Sen. Mitch McConnell's (KY) suggestion that Americans will "get over" Medicaid cuts.

Despite internal dissent and [recent rulings](#) from Senate Parliamentarian **Elizabeth MacDonough** that will require revisions to the regulation, both President **Donald Trump** and Senate Majority

Leader **Thune** [remain confident](#) the Senate would pass the budget plan by the July 4 weekend.

"It's not surprising that Americans don't want to pay for more tax cuts for the wealthy by slashing food assistance, Medicaid, and Medicare. But that's exactly what the Republican budget plan calls for," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "We must continue to speak out and make sure senators stop this destructive bill."

ACTION NEEDED: [Click here to tell your senators to vote against the budget proposal when it comes to the floor.](#)

Alliance Marks LGBTQ+ Pride Month

Throughout Pride Month, the Alliance aims to uplift the LGBTQ+ community, who face unique challenges in the workplace and play an essential role in championing labor justice. [1.8](#) percent of Americans over the age of 65 and at least [4](#) percent of the U.S. workforce are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, which is why it is essential to understand the intersection between seniors' issues, labor rights, and LGBTQ+ communities.

Ensuring equality in the workplace is critical — 47 percent of LGBTQ+ workers have [experienced](#) discrimination at their job at some point in their lives. A pay gap also remains: LGBTQ+ workers [make](#) 10 percent less than other workers on average, leading to lower Social Security benefits in retirement. Union membership is highly effective in closing this gap and [creating](#) wage equity.

"All Americans should have access to a safe work environment free of the threat of discrimination or dismissal," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "The Alliance wishes its members a Happy Pride Month and encourages allies to help fight for increased workplace protections for the LGBTQ+ community."

KFF Health News: Many Older People Embrace Vaccines. Research Is Proving Them Right.

By Paula Span

Kim Beckham, an insurance agent in Victoria, Texas, had seen friends suffer so badly from shingles that she wanted to receive the first approved shingles vaccine as soon as it became available, even if she had to pay for it out-of-pocket.

Her doctor and several pharmacies turned her down because she was below the recommended age at the time, which was 60. So, in 2016, she celebrated her 60th birthday at her local CVS. [...]

For older adults who express more confidence in vaccine safety than younger groups, the past few months have brought welcome research. Studies have found important benefits from a newer vaccine and enhanced versions of older ones, and one vaccine may confer a major bonus that nobody foresaw.

The new studies are coming at a fraught political moment. The nation's health secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has long disparaged certain vaccines, calling them unsafe and saying that the government officials who regulate them are compromised and corrupt.

