



MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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August 11, 2025

Upcoming Social Security 90th Anniversary Events in New York City and Long Island

Metro New York Health Care for All is holding a special forum later this month to celebrate the 90th anniversary of Social Security. It will take place on Monday afternoon, August 18, from 3:30 to 6 pm at 1199 SEIU United Healthcare Workers East, located at 498 Seventh Ave. (at 36th St.) in midtown Manhattan. NYSARA is also a participating organization. There will be a 90-minute formal program featuring public officials, experts, and community and labor leaders, followed by an informal celebration reception with refreshments. This forum will focus on the inter-relationship of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, how they are all now under attack, and what we can do together to fight back to defend them. This event will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person - RSVP for that here to get the zoom link for it:

<https://bit.ly/NYCSocSecAug18LivestreamRSVP>

In addition to the above event, there are two other Social Security 90th anniversary events taking place in NYC next week:

- **Thurs. Aug. 14 @ 12 noon - Keep Social Security Strong! NYC Rally to Support and Celebrate Social Security;** hosted by Social Security Workers United; outside 26 Federal Plaza (Broadway & Worth St.) in Lower

Manhattan https://actionnetwork.org/event_campaigns/on-aug-14-were-socialsecuritystrong

- **Sat. Aug. 16 @ 12 noon - Staten Island Rally to Celebrate and Defend 90 Years of Social Security and Health Care;** hosted by NY-11 for Health Care; outside the Staten Island office of the Social Security Administration, 1510 Hylan Blvd (at Evergreen Ave.) <https://bit.ly/SocSec90AnnivRallySI>

...and there are also these "Protect Our Checks!" Social Security 90th anniversary events in the Downstate region on Sat. Aug. 16:

- Long Island/Port Jefferson Station @ 11 a.m. <https://www.mobilize.us/protectourchecks/event/821791/>
- Hudson Valley/Peekskill @ 12 noon <https://www.mobilize.us/protectourchecks/event/822373/>

NYSARA Biennial Election Convention

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

Place: NYSUT Headquarters - 800 Troy Schenectady Rd., Latham, NY

Purpose: Elect NYSARA Officers 2025-2027, get information issues both nationally and Statewide that have impact on Seniors and actions to take that have impact. Hearing from people who impact Seniors.

Keynote Speaker: Robert Roach, President National ARA

Other Speakers: Ravi Reddi, Senior Staff for US Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (confirmed), Greg Olsen Acting Director NYS Office for the Aging (requested) and NYS Senator Patricia Fahy (requested)

Declared Candidates for NYSARA Office:

President - Barry Kaufmann (NYSUT)

Vice President - Paul Schuh (UAW)

Secretary - Opportunity

Treasurer - Gary Lanahan (CSEA)

Nominations will be taken from the floor. Voting will be by weighted vote as per bylaws. Any nominee MUST be present and representing a Statewide dues payer.

CBO Adjusts Estimate of Deficit Cost of "Big Ugly Bill"

The Congressional Budget Office, the non partisan organization that makes judgments on impact of budget bills, adjusted its estimate of the amount the recently passed "Big Ugly" bill would increase America's deficit. Their initial estimate of an increase to the deficit of \$3.3 trillion was adjusted this week to a deficit of \$4.1 trillion. This was also at the same time millionaires, billionaires and multi national corporations continued with the massive tax breaks enacted in 2017 and made permanent with this bill and millions will lose their health care coverage and or their access to food.

Affordable Care Act Marketplace Premiums Expected to Skyrocket

By Julie Carter and our Friends at Medicare Rights

Insurers with Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace plans have submitted their rates for 2026 and they show a massive spike in premiums. [A new KFF analysis](#) shows that ACA insurers are hiking

premiums by a median rate of about 18%, the largest increase since 2018. These numbers reflect a great deal of uncertainty, inflation, and economic instability affecting the health care market.

Most of these factors are out of congressional control. One aspect, however, could still be changed. KFF estimates that a set of tax credits that [are set to expire at the end of 2025](#) are driving around 4% of the premium spike.

Enhanced Premium Tax Credits

Premium Tax Credits (PTC) help people with low or middle incomes pay their Marketplace premiums. Congress enhanced the PTCs in 2021 and these “enhanced” PTCs have made huge gains in reducing the number of uninsured people. Enhanced PTCs are especially valuable for people aged 50–64 who are not yet eligible for Medicare. In 2024, [nearly five million](#) people in this category got PTCs, and one analysis by [Avalere estimated](#) that the current PTCs save the 50+ ACA population a minimum of \$599 per year, reaching \$4,574 for some enrollees.

A portion of these credits, enhanced PTCs, are set to expire and analysts agree that rising costs will push many people out of their health insurance coverage. KFF projects the new premiums [will increase by over 75% on average](#) with premiums at least doubling in 12 states.

Millions Will Lose Coverage

The [Congressional Budget Office estimated](#) that loss of the enhanced PTCs would increase the number of uninsured people by millions: “the number of uninsured people will rise by 2.2 million in 2026, by 3.7

million in 2027, and by 3.8 million, on average, in each year over the 2026–2034 period.”

These losses come on top of [other actions by Congress and the Trump administration](#) like cuts and new administrative burdens that will terminate coverage for additional millions of people with ACA plans, Medicaid, and Medicare.

All of these cuts and coverage losses will also drive up costs for the Medicare program by increasing the uninsured rate for those nearing eligibility, which in turn worsens health and delays access to care.

It’s Not Too Late to Extend the Expiring Enhanced PTCs

While Congress has so far passed up the opportunity to extend these PTCs, it’s not too late. Members could still choose to extend them and preserve a portion of the ACA’s major reduction in the uninsured rate.

Medicare Rights will continue to advocate for an extension of the PTCs and other congressional actions that can reverse or mitigate the expected coverage losses. This includes pushing for a complete rejection of the reconciliation bill’s devastating health care cuts. We urge all policymakers to prioritize reducing the uninsured rate and helping people gain access to affordable, high-quality care.

New Report: Social Security Administration Field Offices Lost An Estimated 20% of Staff This Year

New reporting from [Axios](#) detailing the full extent of the Trump Administration’s workforce cuts in Social Security Administration field offices was published Thursday and shows how this is affecting Americans across the country.

Axios analyzed a new report "[Social Security's Staffing Crisis](#)" by the Strategic Organizing Center that compared staffing levels from March 2024 and March 2025. It found that the staff cuts implemented by **Elon Musk's** Department of Government Efficiency exacerbated already low SSA staffing levels at 1,200 field offices. More than 1,000 workers accepted DOGE "buyouts" and another 1,000 workers have been reassigned from field offices to answer customer service calls to the national 1-800 number.

"When it takes too long to get your benefits into your bank account after you file because of the understaffing situation, you're going months and months without needed income that was promised to you because you paid in your whole life," says **Jessica LaPointe**, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Council 220, which represents about 25,000 Social Security Administration employees.

Meanwhile, the uncertainty created by the Administration's disinformation and changes at the SSA have put more demands on the agency with more Americans visiting field offices and an 18 percent increase in benefit claims. SSA workers report that the influx of in person visitors combined with reduced office staffing has resulted in longer appointment wait times and walk-in visitors being turned away. Beneficiaries have to wait an average of 35 days for an in person appointment, as of July 2025.

FIGURE A: PERCENT CHANGE IN NUMBER OF ACTIVE SSA FIELD OFFICE WORKERS BY STATE, MARCH 2024-MARCH 2025

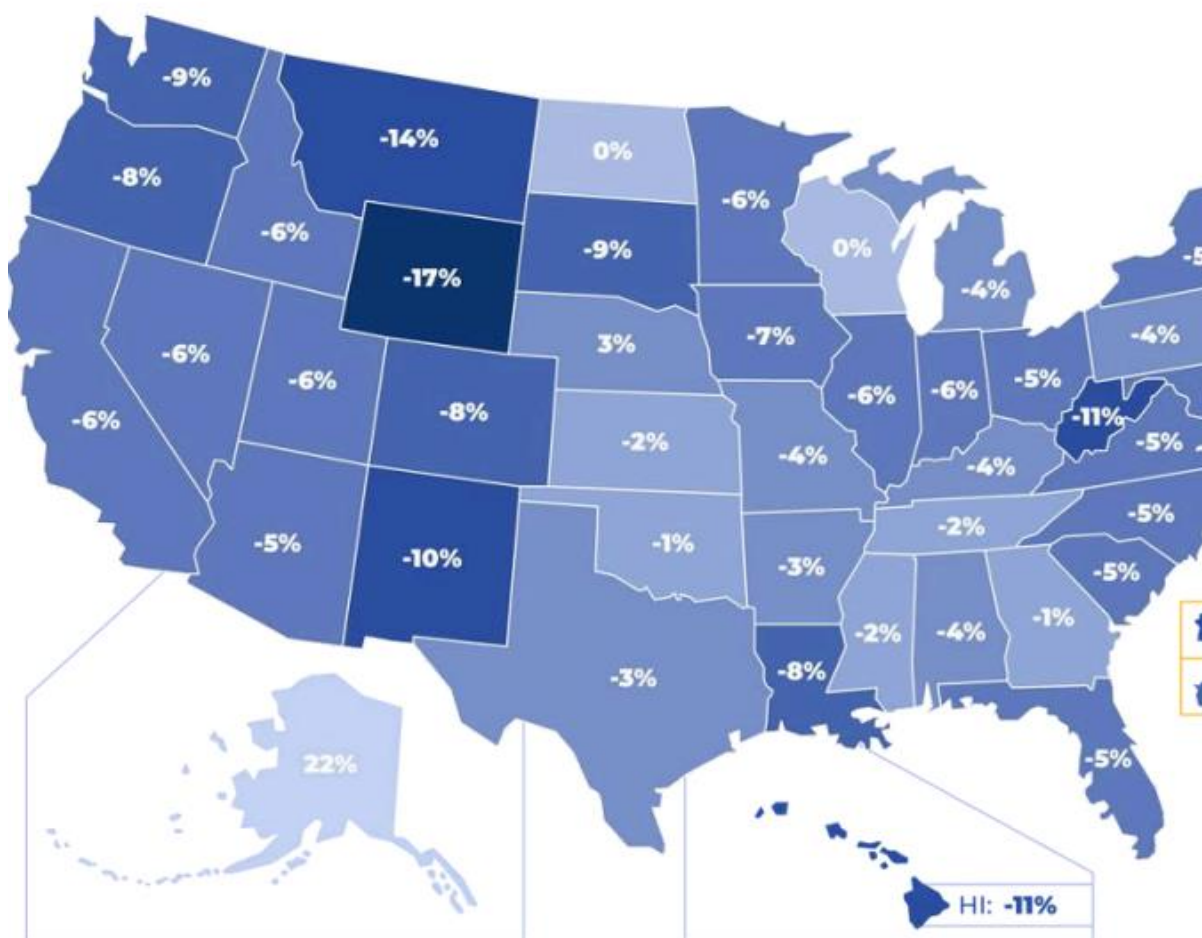


Figure A, "Social Security's Staffing Crisis," Strategic Organizing Center

"This new data reminds us that DOGE workforce cuts have caused massive damage and made it harder for Social Security beneficiaries to get the benefits they have earned. We need more people at SSA answering the phones and staffing field offices, not fewer," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. "Congress must take action to demand that Social Security field offices are fully staffed."

Alliance Members Mark Social Security's 90th Anniversary with Mobilization Events Across the Country

Alliance members have joined the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and other labor allies to hold dozens of "Save Social Security" events to coincide with the 90th anniversary of the earned benefits program.

[Find an event near you. Click here to RSVP.](#)

On Tuesday, more than 100 people attended a Social Security anniversary town hall co-hosted by the Arizona Alliance and Honest Arizona. Sen. **Mark Kelly** (AZ) and former SSA Commissioner **Martin O'Malley** spoke at the event.

Senator Kelly [discussed](#) the negative impacts of DOGE cuts on the Social Security Administration and beneficiaries, saying "this administration has fired a lot of people that administer Social Security, so it's hard for people to receive their benefits. Our wait times are up. Offices are being closed. Staffing is cut drastically, and this is for an agency that was very efficient."

"The agency has never experienced six months like these last six months, with more people pushed out the door in an agency that was already at a 50-year low in staffing and – because of baby boomers of my generation, I know you're all much younger than me – customers grown to an all-time high," **O'Malley** [added](#). "With so many cuts in such a short period of time, including a reduction of their IT staff by 40 percent, we are probably headed towards a benefit interruption of some type at some point."

Alliance members are also scheduling rallies and presenting "Retiree Hero" and "Retiree Zero" awards to highlight legislators' pro-retiree scores in our annual Congressional Voting Record. Texas Alliance members presented Rep. **Mark Veasey** (TX) with a "Retiree Hero" Award after holding a Social

Security anniversary rally in Dallas on Wednesday. Yesterday, the Wisconsin Alliance held an anniversary rally in front of the SSA office in Wasau, and **John “JD” Doran**, 2nd Vice President of the New Mexico Alliance and AFSCME retiree, spoke at a Social Security Awareness press conference held by Rep. **Melanie Stansbury** (NM).



Top left: New Mexico Alliance members with Rep. Melanie Stansbury (NM); Bottom left: Former SSA Commissioner Martin O'Malley and Sen. Mark Kelly (AZ) at the Arizona Alliance's Social Security town hall; Right: Texas Alliance presents a "Retiree Hero" Award to Rep. Mark Veasey (TX)

"Our Alliance activists are speaking out about the need to protect and strengthen Social Security," said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "At a time when SSA is still reeling from the Department of

Government Efficiency's (DOGE) cuts and prices for essential items like groceries are rising, it's more important than ever to defend earned benefits. We urge everyone to attend an event next week."

New Poll Shows Most Americans Are Stressed About Grocery Prices

A new [AP-NORC poll](#) shows that Americans are concerned about the high cost of groceries, with more than half of those surveyed reporting that buying groceries is a major source of stress.

A large portion of those surveyed also reported that the cost of housing (47 percent), the amount of money they have saved or made (43 percent), and the cost of health care (42 percent) are significant sources of stress.

Respondents were not as concerned about the cost of childcare, student debt, and credit card debt, with [less than 30%](#) specifying these factors as a major financial burden. Despite President Trump's [campaign promise](#) to lower grocery prices and bring costs down "starting on day one," prices have [risen](#) each month since January. In June, food prices were up by [3 percent](#) compared to 2024.

"Sky high grocery prices are putting a real strain on Americans, especially seniors living on fixed incomes," said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. "This is unacceptable. Americans should be able to afford basic necessities."

KFF Health News: Congress Looks To Ease Restrictions on Veterans' Use of Non-VA Clinics and Hospitals

By Tony Leys

WATERLOO, Iowa — John-Paul Sager appreciates the care he has received at Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals and clinics, but he thinks it should be easier for veterans like him to use their benefits elsewhere.

Sager, a Marine Corps and Army veteran, uses his VA coverage for non-VA treatment of back injuries stemming from his military service. But he said he sometimes must make several phone calls to obtain approval to see a local chiropractor. "It seems like it takes entirely too long," he said.

Many veterans live hours from VA facilities, or they need health services that aren't readily available from the VA. In such cases, the department is supposed to provide a referral and pay for private care. Critics say it often hesitates to do so.