



# MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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## Capital District Chapter of NYSARA Hosts Alzheimer's Program



The Capital District Chapter of NYSARA hosted a recent program with representatives from the Alzheimer's Association of New York State. The event

focused on the impact of Alzheimers Disease on individuals, family, friends and caregivers, offering valuable information about how to access information and resources.

Nearly 7 million Americans are living with Alzheimers.

## **Impact of the Affordable Care Act Tax Credits Expiration Especially on Those Age 55-64**

The expiration of *Affordable Care Act (ACA)* enhanced premium tax credits will have a negative impact on adults aged 50 to 64, who typically have more substantial health care needs than younger enrollees but do not yet qualify for Medicare.

Without an extension, *ACA* enhanced premium tax credits will expire at the end of 2025, causing 20 million Americans—including nearly 5 million individuals aged 50 to 64—to see a drastic increase in health insurance costs. The expiration of these enhanced tax credits will have a particularly devastating impact on older adults, who typically have more substantial health care needs than younger populations and can pay up to three times more than younger enrollees for the same plans due to age rating. If their premium costs skyrocket, many older adults will have to sacrifice other essentials to afford health care, and some will be forced to drop their coverage entirely. Gillibrand emphasized the impossible choices that this will force upon older adults and the dire need to reach a bipartisan deal to extend *ACA* tax credits and end the government shutdown.

Enrollees in New York State are already receiving notices of premium hikes ahead of the start of open enrollment on November 1st, underscoring the importance of extending the subsidies immediately. A county-by-county breakdown of expected *ACA* premium increases across New York can be found at [gillibrand.senate.gov/trumphealthcareincrease](https://gillibrand.senate.gov/trumphealthcareincrease).

## **The "Big Ugly" Bill More Harmful and Costly Than Previously Thought**

By Lindsey Copeland and our Friends at Medicare Rights

This week, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [said a provision in the reconciliation bill](#) that widens exemptions from Medicare’s drug negotiation program will cost significantly more than previously thought. The price tag is now \$8.8 billion, an 80% increase over CBO’s original \$4.9 billion estimate. The upward revision was made to more accurately reflect the scope of the policy change.

### **“Orphan Drug” Price Tags Previously Overlooked in HR 1 Evaluation**

Under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), high-cost drugs are generally eligible for Medicare price negotiation if they have been on the market for a while without competition. Some drugs were carved out, including certain “orphan drugs” that treat rare diseases. The reconciliation bill (HR 1) expanded upon this, allowing more orphan drugs to delay negotiation or skirt the program entirely. Originally, CBO did not fully capture the extent to which the enhanced exclusions would raise Medicare costs, leaving key impacted drugs—namely Keytruda, Darzalex, and Opdivo—out of its analysis.

To fill this information gap, other independent experts stepped in, producing reports that examine the HR 1 policy change more comprehensively. For example, a [recent KFF report](#) factors in the drugs CBO initially missed. The authors explain that in 2023, Medicare spent \$17.5 billion on drugs that are likely to be delayed or blocked from negotiation due to HR 1. Keytruda alone accounted for 32% of that amount (\$5.6 billion); Darzalex was the second most expensive (\$2.4 billion), followed by Opdivo (\$2 billion).

The updated CBO analysis accounts for these effects.

### **All Beneficiaries to Experience Higher Costs**

Importantly, in addition to raising Medicare spending by nearly \$4 billion and eroding the IRA’s projected [10-year \\$98.5 billion savings to Medicare](#), HR 1’s additional exemptions will mean higher costs for beneficiaries, who will save less [than anticipated](#) from the drug negotiation program in premiums and out-of-pocket costs. Those who rely on the newly excepted drugs will be hit especially hard. [KFF estimates](#) beneficiaries who take Keytruda and Opdivo will spend roughly \$3,500 and \$3,000 more per year, respectively.



## **Medicare Rights Urges Affordability Reforms**

Medicare Rights is deeply concerned about the impact of HR 1's drug pricing changes on Medicare's financing and prescription drug affordability. Limiting negotiation will result in uncaptured costs that will grow and compound every year, as well as higher drug prices, jeopardizing beneficiary health and economic security. We urge policymakers to reverse this provision without delay, and to otherwise strengthen meaningful access to affordable, high quality health care and prescription drugs.

## **Officials Announce 2.8% COLA Increase for Social Security Beneficiaries**

*The following statement was issued by Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance for Retired Americans, regarding the announcement that there will be a [2.8% cost-of-living \(COLA\) benefit increase](#) for millions of Social Security beneficiaries, disabled veterans and federal retirees next year:*

The 74.5 million Americans who rely on Social Security welcome any increase in their monthly benefits. But let's be clear, millions of older Americans will still struggle to afford housing, food, utilities, and prescription drugs.

The average retired worker will see about \$52 more per month next year. Yet nearly half of that increase will be wiped out by the higher Medicare Part B premium, which is projected to rise to \$206 a month in January. That's \$31 more than in 2025, and would be the first time the premium has exceeded \$200.

"Strengthening and expanding Social Security must be a national priority. If billionaires and the wealthiest 1 percent pay their fair share, we can boost benefits for everyone and guarantee the program's solvency for future generations.

Instead of working to protect Social Security, too many members of Congress and Trump Administration officials are pushing to raise the retirement age, cut benefits, and even privatize the program. Older Americans have earned these benefits through a lifetime of work; they should not have to fight to keep them.

## **House Democrats Stand Against Administration's Planned Social**

## Security Disability Overhaul

On Tuesday, Rep. **John Larson** (CT), Ranking Member, House Committee on Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee, and Rep. **Debbie Wasserman Schultz** (FL) [sent a letter](#) to SSA Commissioner **Frank Bisignano** – signed by 165 additional House Democrats – opposing the Administration’s plans to overhaul Social Security disability (SSDI) benefits. Alliance Executive Board Member **Ken Goodfriend** [joined](#) Rep. **Wasserman Schultz** [at a news conference](#) highlighting the letter.

Earlier this month, *the Washington Post* [reported](#) that the Administration plans to update the criteria included in Social Security disability benefit evaluations so that the age threshold for applicants is either increased to 60 years of age or eliminated. Currently, SSA officials incorporate a person’s age, work history and education with their medical assessment when reviewing a disability claim. [A new report](#) from the Center for American Progress shows that the planned change would make it harder to qualify for benefits and cause harm for millions of older Americans. The [average age](#) of Social Security disability beneficiaries is 56 years old. The Administration’s plan could reduce eligibility by as much as 20 percent overall and up to 30 percent for older Americans.

“Making it harder for people to get disability benefits is a clear violation of President **Trump**’s promise to ‘not touch’ Social Security,” said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance. “We stand with the members of Congress who are defending Social Security and will join them in fighting this and any other cuts to the benefits we have earned over a lifetime of work.”

## One Week Left For In Person Registration: Alliance Annual Retirement Security Symposium is on November 19

There’s only one more week left to register to attend our annual Retiree Security Symposium, *The Looming Retirement Security Crisis*, in person on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM at AFL-CIO headquarters in Washington, DC.

**Liz Shuler**, President of the AFL-CIO and Rep. **John Larson** (CT), Ranking Member,

House Committee on Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee, will speak at the event and AFL-CIO Deputy Director of Corporations and Capital Markets **Brandon Reese** will lead a panel discussion.

Due to limited space, please RSVP at <https://tinyurl.com/Symposium111925> by **November 1, 2025**. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided. The event will also be livestreamed. Respondents who RSVP to attend virtually will receive the link for the livestream.

If you have any questions, please contact Joni Jones at [jjones@retiredamericans.org](mailto:jjones@retiredamericans.org) / 202-637-5377.

## **California Alliance Mobilizes Retirees in Redistricting Fight**

California Alliance members have mobilized and placed more than 216,000 calls to older voters about Proposition 50 in the weeks leading up to the state's November 4 special election.

Proposition 50 is [a ballot initiative](#) that would require the state to adopt new, legislatively-drawn congressional district maps starting next year until the next U.S. Census in 2030. The state legislature passed the measure after President Trump demanded Republican states redraw their congressional districts to increase the GOP's chances of regaining control of the U.S. House in 2026.

So far, Alliance members have completed more than 500 volunteer phone banking shifts urging them to vote yes on Prop 50 when they cast their ballots. Early voting is already underway in California, and residents can find information about how, where, and when they can cast their ballots by going to [vote.org](https://vote.org).

"California Alliance members know what's at stake and are committed to reaching as many voters as they can by Election Day," said **Pauline Brooks**, President of the California Alliance. "We are proud to be on the front lines in the fight to protect democracy."