



FRIDAY ALERT

Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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Headlines:

Alliance Members Continue Social Security Birthday Celebrations

Alliance Protest Targets Paul Ryan's Book Tour

Sen. Schumer Introduces Bill to Stop Social Security Office Closures

Stand Up Against Social Security Service Cuts

Sunday Marks 50th Anniversary of Seniors' Rally for Creation of Medicare Program

Unexpectedly High Medical Bills Often the Result of a Few Common Issues

Fiesta Attends DNC Seniors Council Meeting in Georgia

Here is your August 22 Friday Alert:

Alliance Members Continue Social Security Birthday Celebrations

With Social Security celebrating its 79th birthday last week, Alliance members have been holding events across the country honoring the landmark retirement security program. This week's events included celebrations with cake and balloons in states such as Iowa, Missouri, New York, and Pennsylvania. To view the latest photos from Social Security birthday celebrations, go to <http://bit.ly/1tpnf4H>.

The North Carolina Alliance hosted a birthday celebration in Charlotte, where members released a report from Alliance partner Social Security Works examining the Social Security system's importance in the state. The local NBC-TV affiliate, WCNC, covered the event and interviewed North Carolina Alliance President Jim Moore. To view the clip, go to <http://bit.ly/1jAiVf>. To see the report for North Carolina and other states, go to <http://tinyurl.com/pt4ru5z>.

Alliance Protest Targets Paul Ryan's Book Tour

On Wednesday, the Pennsylvania Alliance held a protest in Philadelphia, as Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) rolled into town on the first stop of a national tour promoting his new book. The protestors assembled outside Ryan's event, a speaking engagement at the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia, and carried signs drawing attention to the House Budget Committee Chairman's proposals to fast-track cuts to Social Security and turn Medicare into a voucher system.

Alliance member and AFSCME Retiree Dorothea Wilson, who picketed, responded to Ryan's visit, saying, "For us retirees, he's done everything he could to mess with our Medicare, our Medicaid, and Social Security. He doesn't seem to think that older citizens need anything. Everything we have, he wants to take away from us." To read more on the protests from the Philadelphia Daily News, go to <http://bit.ly/1wdAHwX>. For photos of the protestors in action, go to <http://bit.ly/1mq7aqb>.

"The Paul Ryan budget would not only end Medicare as we know it by turning it into a voucher program, but also raise the Medicare eligibility age to 67. In addition, it would gut Medicaid and provide a windfall for millionaires," said Ruben Burks, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Sen. Schumer Introduces Bill to Stop Social Security Office Closures

Since 2010, more than 80 Social Security field offices and more than 500 temporary mobile offices have been shut down – the largest reduction in Social Security field offices in the program's history. These closings come as the Baby Boomer generation hits retirement age and demand for services is skyrocketing. In response to the closings, Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) has introduced a new bill, the Improving Access to Social Security Services Act (S.2742), which would require all future Social Security offices closures to go through a period of public review before any action is taken. Communities would have the opportunity to evaluate the impact of any proposed closures and to stand up for their local field offices before they are shut down.

"Social Security field offices are a critical part of ensuring that retirees and other beneficiaries have access to the full benefits they have earned," said Barbara J. Easterling, President of the Alliance.

Stand Up Against Social Security Service Cuts

This week, as a part of the push to cut face-to-face services and move Social Security to an online service model, the Social Security Administration (SSA) kicked off a campaign to encourage beneficiaries to sign up on their mySocialSecurity website. With nearly 17 million seniors without regular internet access and 43 million annual visitors to Social Security field offices, a coalition of groups, including the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and the Alliance, is looking to spread the word that high-

quality, face to face services simply can't be replaced with an online alternative. To get involved, connect with the Alliance on Facebook at <http://on.fb.me/1z87m3e> and Twitter at <http://bit.ly/1q3909a>, and share posts opposing in-person service cuts with your friends.

Sunday Marks 50th Anniversary of Seniors' Rally for Creation of Medicare Program

This Sunday, August 24, will mark the 50th anniversary of a historic rally for Medicare held on the boardwalk outside of the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The rally, organized by the National Council of Senior Citizens, took place on August 24, 1964. During the event, 14,000 seniors marched 10 blocks down the Atlantic City boardwalk to the convention hotel, calling on Congress to pass legislation providing universal health coverage for older Americans. Less than a year later, on July 30th, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Medicare into law.

"The boardwalk rally is a fantastic example of seniors joining together to spur Congress to action. Today, we can use that same spirit to fight to expand Social Security and protect Medicare from threats like Rep. Ryan's budget plan," said Richard Fiesta, Executive Director of the Alliance.

Unexpectedly High Medical Bills Often the Result of a Few Common Issues

Medical billing can be a complicated process, and when insurance companies fail to cover the full cost of services, patients often find themselves on the hook for more money than they expected. According to a recent article in USA Today, there are a number of reasons why an insurance company might not cover the full cost of a bill.

Common reasons include an error on the part of an insurance company; a doctor being considered "out of network"; and an insurance company missing information following a claim filing. Experts recommend asking plenty of questions ahead of time, documenting all contact with an insurance company, and making sure to follow up if a bill seems higher than it should be. For more on what to look out for, and tips on avoiding unexpectedly high medical bills, go to <http://usat.ly/VI24OI>.

Fiesta Attends DNC Seniors Council Meeting in Georgia

Mr. Fiesta traveled to Atlanta to speak at the Democratic National Committee Seniors Council Meeting on Thursday.

For a printable version of this document, go to <http://bit.ly/1mv0Pde>.

For the Alliance's Spanish language page, which includes last week's Friday Alert in Spanish, go to www.alianzadejubilados.org.