2020 Social Security-Medicare Anniversary Toolkit
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## 2020 Anniversary Summer Toolkit

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JUNE 2020

AUGUST 2020

**JULY 2020**

- **Sunday, July 5**: 245th Anniversary of the USPS
- **Monday, July 6**: 55th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act
- **Wednesday, July 22**: Call-in Days: Protect and Expand Medicare/Medicaid (866) 828-4162
- **Friday, July 31**: 55th Anniversary Medicare/Medicaid

**NOTES**

- **Yellow Text** = House and Senate Recess
- **Blue Text** = Senate Recess Only
- **Red Text** = House Recess Only
- **Green Text** = Federal Holiday, National Offices Closed
- **Blue Text** = Holiday
- **Red Text** = Alliance Dates of Note
# August 2020

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**NOTES**

- **Yellow Text**: House and Senate Recess
- **Blue Text**: Senate Recess Only
- **Green Text**: House Recess Only
- **Red Text**: Federal Holiday, National Offices Closed
- **Holiday**: Alliance Dates of Note
- **Blue Text**: Call-in Days: Protect and Expand Social Security (866) 828-4162

**Call-in Days: Protect and Expand Social Security (866) 828-4162**

- **55th Anniversary of Voting Rights Act**: 2nd and 4th of August
- **85th Anniversary of Social Security**: 16th and 18th of August
- **100th Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage (19th Amendment)**: 23rd and 25th of August
This year is the 55th and 85th anniversary of Medicare and Social Security, respectively. To help connect these anniversaries to current threats to these critical programs, we have developed a program for use around the country.

Because of the threats to health and safety posed by COVID-19, anniversary celebrations and actions will take on a different look and feel, while maintaining the commitment to advocacy and advancing a retiree movement.

**Video Conferencing Celebration**
Schedule an anniversary with the Alliance using our video conferencing system. Alliance staff is available to administer the video conference and train speakers on the technology prior to the event. Invite elected officials to join. Set a speakers agenda and encourage participants to supply their own cake and or use the mug-cake recipe included in this toolkit.

**Virtual Lobby Visit**
Many congressional offices are scheduling visits using videoconferencing. One member of your chapter should make the request a

**Call in Day to Congress**
The Alliance patch through line is (866) 828-4162. Between Monday, July 27th-31st, this line will connect callers to their Senators with an ask to pass HR3, which would expand Medicare. Beginning August 1st, the line will connect callers with

**Home-based Visibility Events**
The Alliance has designed 8 ½ X 11 signs that celebrate anniversaries this summer. Print and hang them on windows, doors or cars and post them online.

**Car Parade**
Recruit a CARavan of 5-10 (or more) cars that each driver decorates with signs, streamers, etc. Meet at a central location with a route in mind and drive by congressional offices, Social Security offices, or post offices and honk. If possible, one car should have a passenger with a portable PA or bullhorn who can stop with the caravan in front of these offices, say a few words about the importance of the program and say Happy Birthday.
Mug Cake Recipe
This single-serving recipe is perfect for celebrating while staying safe. Add frosting, sprinkles, ice cream, or a candle to make it extra festive!

Ingredients
4 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
4 tablespoons milk (or dairy-free milk)
1 1/2 tablespoons flavorless oil (sunflower, vegetable or coconut oil)
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions
In a microwavable mug whisk together the flour, sugar, and baking powder. Add in the milk, oil, and vanilla and mix until just combined. Microwave for roughly 45 seconds - 1 minute, or until firm to the touch.

Recommended Agenda for Video Conference Celebration
Welcome participants
Invited Speakers
Present Fact Sheets and/or Presentation about Challenges and Opportunities
Open the floor for sharing of stories
Present Hero or Zero Awards, if applicable
Enjoy anniversary cake
Local Chapters can be a powerful organizing strategy to build capacity in population centers as well as building the community necessary for a robust and successful retiree movement. Even as we are physically distant, using videoconferencing, local chapters can stay socially connected and maintain regular meetings.

**Organizing Recommendations**

- Local Chapters can be comprised of Alliance members; members of Alliance affiliate organizations and CAN members.
- Local Chapters should choose a standing day and time to meet, preferably on a monthly basis.
- Contact Michelle Campbell, mcampbell@retiredamericans.org to reserve a day and time for your video conference. Participants will be able to attend by video and or by phone.
- The naming convention should be [Location] Chapter of the [State] Alliance for Retired Americans.
- Before each meeting, a point person should gather updates from the state Alliance.

**Governing Structure**

- Each local chapter should elect officers to be accountable to the governance of the chapter.
  - **President** – Agrees to prepare and moderate meetings. Should be in touch with State Alliance for updates.
  - **Vice-President** – Agrees to support and fill in for President when necessary.
  - **Recording Secretary** – Agrees to record attendance and send out invitations and/or reminders of upcoming meetings.
Social Security and Medicare: Current Facts and Figures

The Many Faces of Social Security

Nearly 178 million workers contribute to Social Security through payroll taxes. Nearly 64 million people receive monthly Social Security benefits:

- 44.5 million people receive retirement benefits
- 6 million people receive survivors’ benefits
- 8.5 million people receive disability benefits

Average 2020 Monthly Social Security Benefit

- A retired worker: $1,503
- A retired couple: $2,531
- Disabled worker: $1,258
- Disabled worker with spouse and child: $2,176
- Widow or widower: $1,422
- Young widow or widower with two children: $2,934
- Maximum Monthly Social Security Benefit: $3,011 (for worker retiring at Full Retirement Age)

2020 Social Security and Medicare Contribution Amounts

Social Security: 6.2% for both workers and employers. This contribution is paid on earnings up to $137,700.
Medicare: 1.45% for both workers and employers on all wages.

2020 Social Security Eligibility

Full Retirement Age: 66
Early Retirement Age: 62 (taking early retirement can reduce Social Security benefits up to 30 percent)

Social Security: When and How to Apply for Benefits

You should apply for Social Security benefits four months before the date you want your benefits to start. You can apply in one of the following ways:

- Visit your local Social Security office. Call 1-800-772-1213 to find the nearest office.
- Call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can call Social Security at TTY 1-800-325-0778.
- Online: https://secure.ssa.gov/iClaim/rib

Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2020: 1.6%
The Many Faces of Medicare

Nearly 178 million workers contribute to Medicare through payroll taxes. Approximately 61.2 million people receive Medicare benefits, including:
- 52.6 million people age 65 and older
- 8.6 million people with disabilities

2020 Medicare Part A (Hospital Coverage)

Deductible: $1,408 (first 60 days of Medicare-covered inpatient hospital care)
Coinsurance: $0 (Days 1-60), $352 per day (Days 61-90)

2020 Medicare Part B (Physician Coverage)

For all beneficiaries: Part B deductible is $198 and the Part B copayment is 20%.

2020 Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug Coverage)

Monthly Premium: Varies by plan (higher-income consumers may pay more)
Deductible: Varies by plan, $435 maximum

Doughnut Hole: $4,020 - $6,350. Beneficiaries in the doughnut hole will receive a 75% discount for brand-name drugs and a 63% discount on generics
Cap on Out-of-pocket Costs: $6,350 (prior to catastrophic, includes discounts)

In addition to a monthly plan premium, high-income individuals will pay an income-related monthly adjustment amount as noted below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual’s Income</th>
<th>Couple’s Income</th>
<th>Income-related monthly adjustment amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$87,000 or below</td>
<td>$174,000 or below</td>
<td>$0.00</td>
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<td>$87,001 - $109,000</td>
<td>$174,001 - $218,000</td>
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Medicare: When and How to Apply for Benefits

Medicare is available for people age 65 or older, younger people with disabilities and people with End Stage Renal Disease. If you sign up after you turn 65, you may be penalized unless you have other coverage. Click here for more information about when to apply for Medicare: https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/justmedicare.html.

If you want to apply for Medicare, call 1-800-772-1213 or visit their website: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/medicareonly.
Medicare Expansion

On December 12, 2019, House Speaker Pelosi and House Democrats passed the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3). The bill allows the government to negotiate lower drug prices for people covered by Medicare and private insurance. The bill is awaiting Senate action.

H.R. 3 requires the government to negotiate lower drug prices and caps out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs under Part D to $2,000 a year. H.R. 3 will save nearly $500 billion, which will be used to expand Medicare benefits. The following expansion bills were rolled into HR 3:

**Medicare Hearing Act (H.R. 4618)**

H.R. 4618, introduced by Representatives Lucy McBath (D-GA) and Debbie Dingell (D-MI), will provide coverage for hearing services and hearing aids to millions of Medicare beneficiaries. Currently, Medicare only provides coverage for hearing and balance exams. Fifty percent of Americans who are 60 or older have a meaningful hearing impediment. Research has linked hearing loss to falls, dementia, cognitive decline, social isolation, and reduced quality of life. These conditions increase an individual’s total Medicare spending by an average of $2,500 annually, according to one analysis.

**Medicare Dental Act (H.R. 4650)**

H.R. 4650, introduced by Representatives Robin Kelly (D-IL) and Steven Horsford (D-NV), will provide coverage for preventative dental screening, as well as routine treatment and major services, like root canals. Medicare does not cover most dental services such as preventive dental care, routine dental treatments, or dentures. Lack of dental coverage can affect one’s overall health and exacerbate chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular and kidney disease. In 2016, half of Medicare beneficiaries did not see a dentist, and the 20% that did spent $1,000 for dental services. H.R. 4650 would also cover dentures.

**Medicare Vision Act (H.R. 4665)**

H.R. 4665 sponsored by Representatives Kim Schrier (D-WA), Tom O’Halleran (D-AZ), Elissa Slotkin (D-MI) and Suzan DelBene (D-WA), will provide routine eye examinations and fitting services for eyeglasses and contact lenses. Currently, Medicare only covers vision services related to certain diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts and diabetes retinopathy. H.R. 4665 would also cover either one pair of eyeglasses during a two-year period or a two-year supply of contact lenses.
Strengthening Social Security Act

On May 9, 2019, Representative Linda Sanchez (D-CA) introduced the Strengthening Social Security Act, H.R. 2654, in the U.S. House of Representatives. This legislation will strengthen the Social Security system while improving the economic and retirement security of millions of Americans.

Strengthening Social Security

For more than 80 years, Social Security has delivered its guaranteed benefits on time and without interruption. While Social Security’s hard-earned benefits are modest — they are vitally important to all who rely on them, including seniors, people with disabilities and families of deceased workers. Today over 62 million Americans — 1 out of every 4 households — rely on Social Security’s lifetime, guaranteed benefits.

The Strengthening Social Security Act includes provisions that would strengthen Social Security by improving the solvency of the Social Security Trust Funds and, at the same time, improve the benefit calculations and annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for all Social Security programs.

Increases Social Security Benefits: By adjusting the benefit formula, the Strengthening Social Security Act increases Social Security benefits on average by about $65 per month or $800 per year.

Adopts the CPI-E to Calculate Cost of Living Adjustments: In requiring the use of the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers (CPI-E) to measure Social Security’s COLA, the Strengthening Social Security Act ensures that Social Security benefits keep pace with the rising costs of goods and services typically used by older Americans.

Improves Benefits for Widows and Widowers: Ensures that surviving spouses receive 75% of the total household Social Security benefits that they received prior to their spouse’s death.

Strengthens the Social Security Trust Fund: To pay for these benefit improvements and ensure Social Security is solvent for years to come, the Strengthening Social Security Act raises and ultimately scraps the cap on earnings subject to Social Security contributions (currently capped at $132,900) over a 5-year period. This change alone extends the life of the Social Security Trust Fund through 2041.
Trump is Using Coronavirus as a Smokescreen to Cut Social Security

President Trump has made it crystal clear that he wants to cut earned benefits, telling a reporter in January that he plans to cut “entitlements” at the end of this year. Now, he has escalated his attack by pushing a coronavirus payroll tax cut that will threaten Social Security’s dedicated stream of funding. Referring to future stimulus bills on May 3, he appeared on Fox News and said "we're not doing anything without a payroll tax cut."


Trump’s Budget Slashes Medicare

The Trump Administration budgets propose slashing $845 BILLION from Medicare over 10 years. He has also said that gutting Medicare would be a “good second-term project.”


Levin, Bess, “Trump has told friends that gutting Medicare could be a fun ‘second-term project,’” Vanity Fair, August 22, 2019.

Trump Continues to Chip Away at ACA Despite Pandemic

The President has continued to slowly gut the Affordable Care Act (ACA) during the coronavirus pandemic, unnecessarily making seniors and uninsured Americans more vulnerable. The Trump administration has refused to take action to ensure that federal and state marketplaces are re-opened so that newly uninsured patients can get the coverage they need.
TRUMP BETRAYS SENIORS

The ACA’s annual wellness exams and preventive screenings, prescription drug discounts, and other benefits are more important for seniors now than ever. The law’s critical protections for people with pre-existing conditions are especially important given that at least 25% of people aged 50-64 years old have one or more pre-existing conditions.


Noel-Miller, Claire and Sung, Jane, “In Health Reform, Stakes are High for Older Americans with Preexisting Health Conditions,” AARP Public Policy Institute, March 2017.

Trump Makes Nursing Home Residents More Vulnerable

The Trump administration has eased regulations for nursing homes at every turn, relaxing requirements for safety inspections and shielding them from potential lawsuits. The administration has also neglected to require universal, immediate coronavirus testing for all nursing home residents and staff.


Trump Makes Workers More Vulnerable

President Trump has not required the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to issue guidelines and emergency regulations in response to coronavirus, unnecessarily increasing workers’ risk of infection.

No Progress on Lowering Prescription Drug Prices

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs -- and prices are escalating faster than the rate of inflation. Just in 2020, the average price increase for prescription drugs is 5%.

Reining in drug prices would help seniors and Medicare. High prescription drug prices are the single biggest driver of Medicare costs.

Candidate Trump promised to bring down drug prices, but has only delivered lip service, empty promises and so-called solutions that don’t get to the root of the problem.

The President has been unwilling to stand up to wealthy pharmaceutical corporations and instead has given them billions in tax breaks. His failure to act has intensified inequality during the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, members of his administration refused when asked if they would take action to ensure that coronavirus treatments and vaccines are affordable for everyone.

The President plans to thwart efforts to lower drug prices. He promised to veto a bill passed by the House of Representatives that would allow Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices on behalf of all Americans.

Requiring Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices on behalf of Americans must be a part of any prescription drug proposal. The government negotiates prices on everything from airplanes to military uniforms to office supplies, securing lower prices for taxpayers. Prescription drugs purchased by Medicare should be treated the same way.


President Trump has continued to denounce mail-in voting, falsely claiming that it enables widespread voter fraud -- even though he and senior members of his staff and cabinet themselves cast absentee ballots by mail. He favors forcing seniors to leave their homes to cast their ballots, often while under a shelter in place order, and risking infection from the coronavirus.

Without the funding that the president opposes, the Postal Service could run out of money as soon as September. Mail service interruptions could begin just as absentee voting by mail takes place in the states that have fully implemented it.

Expanding Social Security and increasing benefits by eliminating the cap on earnings subject to the Social Security payroll tax would mean that the wealthiest Americans finally pay their fair share into the system. President Trump has endorsed doing just the opposite - cutting Social Security.
Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) have filed the Quality Care for Nursing Home Residents and Workers during COVID-19 Act, H.R. 6698 and S. 3644, to help address this crisis and protect residents and workers during this pandemic. The bill not only mandates testing and requires stricter safety protocols, it also ensures residents can return to the facility if they left due to COVID-19. The bill does the following:

**Infection Prevention and Control**
Requires nursing homes to have a full-time infection control specialist. It also requires states to survey agencies to ensure surveyors have adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) and conduct inspections within 72 hours if a facility's ratio of death to cases or suspected cases exceeds 5%.

**Testing**
Requires residents to be tested once a week and workers to be tested daily or screened until adequate testing is available.

**Worker Safety**
Requires facilities to provide comprehensive worker training, PPE and two weeks of sick leave.

**Transparency**
Requires facilities to report all COVID-19 cases, including demographic information, as well as all COVID-19 and non-COVID 19 deaths within 24 hours, and to inform residents, families or their representatives and workers within 12 hours of a confirmed case or death. Nursing homes must also report PPE availability and need, staffing and testing data.

**Strike Teams**
Provides $500 million to states to establish expert strike teams to be deployed within 72 hours of 3 confirmed or suspected COVID 19 cases.

**Designating COVID-19 Facilities**
Requires CMS to establish criteria for a facility to be designated as COVID-19-only. This ensures appropriate guidelines to protect residents.

**Addresses Complaint Surveys**
Requires that the government develop a plan to address other non-emergency nursing home inspections that were suspended during the pandemic and reinstitute them as soon as possible.
On October 31, 2019, Senator Mitt Romney (UT) and Representative Mike Gallagher (WI) introduced the Time to Rescue the United States Trusts (TRUST) Act, S. 2733 & H.R. 4907. This legislation establishes congressional “rescue committees” to review the federal Social Security, Medicare and Highway Trust Funds.

The TRUST Act sponsors say that this law is needed because these programs are “spiraling toward insolvency.” The so-called rescue committees would be tasked with reviewing these federal programs and making recommendations.

However, the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds, however, are fully funded for more than a decade. In fact, they can pay full benefits until 2034. And 76% benefits after that.

The TRUST Act does not place limits on what could be considered or how solvency would be determined. All options would be on the table, including cutting benefits for current and future Social Security and Medicare beneficiaries.

Once a rescue committee approves its recommendations, they would be fast tracked to a vote. The recommendations could not be considered, debated or revised by the relevant Congressional committees.

The Rescue Committees

Each rescue committee would be made up of a bipartisan group consisting of 12 members of Congress appointed by the four House and Senate leaders.

The rescue committees would receive suggestions from the House or Senate committees with jurisdiction over these programs, the House Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce and the Senate Committee on Finance. All options could be considered including tax increases and benefits cuts.

The Process

Each committee’s report could be approved by a simple majority vote of the rescue committee, provided at least two members of each party voted for the report. Once consensus is reached, the House and Senate Majority Leaders or the elected officials they appoint could introduce legislation in their respective chambers.

The newly introduced bill would go through an expedited approval process through the relevant House and Senate committees of jurisdiction, with no amendments allowed. Finally, the bill would be fast tracked through the House and Senate floors.
Representatives Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Francis Rooney (R-FL) introduced the Make Medications Affordable by Preventing Pandemic Price Gouging Act, H.R. 6472, on June 17, 2020. Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. H.R. 6472 establishes critical protections against drug price gouging amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The federal government has spent tens of billions of taxpayer dollars on research and development (R&D) of vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, including $23 billion for manufacturing and purchasing. Despite this public investment, there is no guarantee that these taxpayer-funded drugs will be affordable, accessible, or available to all those who need them.

**Access to COVID-19 Drugs for All Who Need Them**

By prohibiting exclusive licensing and ending monopoly control, H.R. 6472 ensures universal access to all taxpayer-funded drugs used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

**Ensures Affordability**

H.R. 6472 mandates reasonable and affordable pricing for new, taxpayer-funded drugs that are used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

**Greater Transparency**

Drug corporations must publicly report specific breakdowns of their total expenditures, including the amount which came from taxpayer dollars, related to any drug used to treat or prevent COVID-19.

**Prevents Price Gouging**

H.R. 6472 blocks excessive pricing of drugs used to treat any disease that causes a public health emergency, not just the COVID-19 pandemic.

Drug price gouging is a threat:

- Drug corporations used a $50 billion windfall from the 2017 tax bill for stock buybacks rather than lowering prices or investing in the development of new drugs;
- Drug prices continue to escalate. In 2020, drug corporations raised the prices of more than 400 drugs by more than five percent with no explanation;
- Remdesivir was developed with $70.5 million of taxpayer dollars, yet there is no requirement that the medication be affordable. In fact, on June 29, 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, Gilead increased the price of their drug Remdesivir -- one of the drugs approved to treat COVID 19 -- by 30% to $3,120 for a five-day treatment.
Member’s State, District, and Name Visited: ____________________________________________

Member or staff in visit: ____________________________________________________________

Participants in meeting: ____________________________________________________________

**CIRCLE RESPONSE FROM MEMBER OR STAFF**

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<th>ANTI-RETIREE POSITION</th>
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<td>MEDICARE</td>
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<td>Supports means-testing higher income beneficiaries or using Medicare to pay for other priorities</td>
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<td>NURSING HOMES</td>
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<td>DRUG COSTS</td>
<td>Supports HR 6472 to Prevent pandemic price gouging.</td>
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<td>Undecided</td>
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Follow-up commitments from the member’s office: ____________________________________________________________________________

Follow-up commitments from the Alliance participants: ____________________________________________________________________________

Any follow-up needs from the National Alliance: ____________________________________________________________________________

Please fill out and submit immediately via fax to 202-637-5398 or via email to Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org.
Social Security & Pensions
Congress Should Oppose Cutting the Payroll Tax
● The payroll tax funds the Social Security program, cutting it will jeopardize the trust fund and the benefits of current and future retirees.
● Cutting the payroll tax is not a good stimulus, as it will not help workers who are unemployed.

Congress Should Oppose any Efforts to Enact the TRUST
● The bill provides no beneficiary protections from benefit cuts, nor does it mandate plan adequacy given the growing number of Americans who rely on these programs.
● The recommendations would be fast tracked through the process without adequate debate, consideration or public input.

Congress Should Protect Multiemployer Pensions
● Job and stock market losses brought on by the coronavirus pandemic have exacerbated the multiemployer crisis. Up to 3 million retirees in 180 multiemployer pension plans are now estimated to be at risk of losing their pensions.
● Pensions are not only critical to providing retirement security to retirees, but also provide economic stimulus to state and local communities.
● Congress should provide federal funding to help fix the multiemployer program.

Medicaid
Congress Should Increase the Federal Medicaid Match
● During times of crisis, like the 2008 recession, Congress increased the federal match to the Medicaid program.
● Congress should increase the Federal Medicaid Assistance Program (FMAP) to help provide for uninsured individuals during this pandemic.
● Further, in order to keep seniors in their homes and out of nursing homes, Congress should adopt the 10% increase in FMAP for Home and Community-Based Care included in the House’s HEROES Act.

Prescription Drugs
Congress Should Enact the Drug Negotiations Bill (HR 3)
● Last year, the House passed the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), which would require the government to negotiate lower drug prices for Medicare and provide the discounted rate to all payers.
● H.R. 3 would also cap yearly out-of-pocket spending in Medicare to $2,000 and limit drug price increases in Medicare Part B and D to the rate of inflation.
● Savings from the drug negotiations would be reinvested into Medicare to expand benefits for vision, hearing and dental.
Congress Should Ensure that any Drug or Vaccine Developed with Taxpayer Dollars to Treat COVID-19 is Affordable

- Congress should pass the Make Medications Affordable by Preventing Pandemic Price Gouging Act, H.R. 6472, which establishes critical protections against drug price gouging amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The federal government has spent tens of billions of taxpayer dollars on research and development (R&D) of vaccines and treatments for COVID-19, including $23 billion for manufacturing and purchasing.
- On June 29, 2020, Gilead increased the price of their drug Remdesivir, one of the drugs approved to treat COVID 19, by 30% to $3,120 for a five-day treatment.

Front Line Workers and Nursing Homes
Congress Should Fund State and Local Governments to Protect Front Line Workers

- The bipartisan National Governors Association has requested $500 billion for state and local governments.
- Congress should provide these funds to protect front line workers and help states continue to protect the public from this pandemic.

Congress Should Protect Nursing Homes Residents and Workers

- Over 50,000 older Americans in nursing homes have died of COVID-19 and many more are infected.
- Congress should enact the Quality Care for Nursing Home Residents and Workers During COVID-19 Act (H.R. 6698; S. 3644). This bill would require, among other things, testing of nursing home residents and workers, an infection control specialist in each nursing home and $500 million to states to create strike teams to assist nursing homes that become infected with COVID-19.

Postal Service
Congress Should Protect the Postal Service

- The coronavirus pandemic has caused a reduction in mail service jeopardizing the Postal Service’s funding, which comes from postage and parcel fees.
- The Postal Service is vital to seniors who rely on it to deliver their Social Security checks and their life-saving medications.
- Congress should support the $25 billion included in the HEROES Act to protect the US Postal Service.

[6/29/2020]
Dear Editor:

July marks the 55th anniversary of Medicare. It has improved the lives of millions of retirees like me. Before Medicare, only half of our nation’s seniors had health insurance. When uninsured seniors had serious health problems, they faced an impossible choice: risk financial ruin by seeking care or avoid treatment altogether and watch their health deteriorate. Thanks to Medicare, nearly all of our nation’s seniors now have guaranteed health coverage.

However, as good as Medicare is, we can do better. Medicare spends billions on prescription drugs for retirees. Yet it cannot use its massive bargaining power to negotiate lower prices with pharmaceutical corporations. The Senate must pass The Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), allowing Medicare to negotiate with drug corporations, like the Veterans Administration and Medicaid do today, saving taxpayers $500 billion over the next 10 years.

We owe it to future generations to keep the Medicare program strong and healthy. Allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices on behalf of the American people would strengthen it and save the taxpayer billions.

Sincerely Yours,

(Name, Alliance position)  (Address)
July 30th marks the 55th anniversary of Medicare. It has improved the lives of millions of retirees like me. Before Medicare, only half of our nation’s seniors had health insurance. When uninsured seniors had serious health problems, they faced an impossible choice: risk financial ruin by seeking care or avoid treatment and watch their health deteriorate.

Thanks to Medicare, 52.6 million people across the country aged 65 and older now have health coverage. While having access is a start, we can and should do better for older Americans.

The Senate must pass the Lower Drug Costs Now Act (H.R. 3), which allows Medicare to negotiate drug prices for people covered by Medicare and private insurance. This will save nearly $500 billion, which will be used to expand Medicare benefits to include hearing, vision, and dental. The bill also caps out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs under Part D to $2,000 a year.

Allowing Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices will strengthen the program, while saving the taxpayers billions and reducing costs for seniors.

Sincerely Yours,

(Name, Alliance position) (Address)
Dear Editor:

July 30th marks the 55th anniversary of Medicare. Before Medicare, only half of our nation’s seniors had health insurance, but now 52.6 million people across the country aged 65 and older have the health coverage they need. The program has improved the lives of millions of retirees like me.

Despite the popularity and success of Medicare, President Trump has made it crystal clear that he wants to cut this crucial program. The Trump administration’s budgets have proposed slashing $845 billion from Medicare over 10 years. He has also said that gutting Medicare would be a “good second-term project.”

These broken promises are even more upsetting amid the pandemic. We need to strengthen Medicare and elect leaders who understand the importance of the program for the health and economic security of retirees.

Sincerely Yours,

(Name, Alliance position) (Address)