

FRIDAY ALERT



Alliance for Retired Americans

815 16th Street, NW, Fourth Floor • Washington, DC 20006 • 202.637.5399

www.retiredamericans.org • aracommunications@retiredamericans.org

June 30, 2017

Spanish version: www.alianzadejubilados.org

Health Care Bill Stalled in Senate – for Now

After weeks of writing the legislation in secret by a handful of senators, followed by a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report estimating that the Senate's health care bill would leave 22 million Americans uninsured, Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** on Tuesday announced that he would postpone the vote on the bill.

The bill has so far failed to get the support of enough Republican Senators and is also [deeply unpopular](#) with the American people. Only 17% of Americans approve of the legislation.

Sen. McConnell, who was hoping the bill would get through the Senate quickly – and before the public was fully aware of what was in it – will now have to wait until after the July 4 recess to proceed with his plan.

The delay is at least a temporary victory for the Alliance and other health care advocates who demonstrated strong, vocal opposition, but there is still reason for concern. McConnell does have leverage: the draft legislation provides nearly \$200 billion that he could add to the bill while still meeting the savings targets he must under the Senate's "budget reconciliation" rules. Late Wednesday, Senate Republican leaders agreed to add \$45 billion over 10 years in special funds to treat opioid addiction, at least partially addressing concerns of several senators who have withheld their support.

"We thought the House bill was bad, but the Medicaid cuts in the Senate bill are even more extreme, and they hit seniors, those with disabilities, and those in [nursing homes](#) especially hard," said **Robert Roach, Jr.**, President of the Alliance.

"The age tax, which asks older Americans to pay five times what younger people pay for the same plan, remains part of the Senate bill too," added **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance.

Republicans can only afford 2 "no" votes from their members, and as of Thursday, [twelve senators](#) either oppose or have expressed concerns with the Senate version. The bill's detractors among the Republicans include both moderates and conservatives, and it will be [difficult](#) for McConnell to appease both sides.

Alliance Health Care Activities Help Prevent Dangerous, Hurried Legislation

The decision to postpone the vote comes after weeks of pressure on Republican Senators to vote against the measure. Across the country, members of the Alliance have met with their representatives, demonstrated, and written editorials and letters in their newspapers. Those efforts will now continue into the month of July – and possibly beyond.

On Monday more than 10,000 Alliance members joined Sen. **Ron Wyden** (D-OR) for a tele-town hall and learned more about the Senate bill's effect on retirees. Participants were able to push a button to be connected to their own Senator and urge a "NO" vote at the end of the call.

Texas Alliance members joined the group "Indivisible," Planned Parenthood and others to rally for health care with a ["die in"](#) outside Senator **John Cornyn's** Dallas office. Arizona Alliance members met with Sen. **Jeff Flake's** and **John McCain's** staff in their district offices.



An Illinois Alliance activist makes her position on health care known

In addition to several thousand calls by Alliance members to Senate offices, Florida Alliance members and their allies protested the bill in person at Sen. **Marco Rubio's** offices in Orlando and [Palm Beach Gardens](#). North Carolina Alliance members [delivered petitions](#) opposing the GOP plan to Sen. **Richard Burr's** office. New York State Alliance members contacted their friends and families in other states and advised them to call their senators about the bill. All together more than 5,000 Alliance activists reached their senators offices to express their concerns about this dangerous bill.

Seventeen Senators Warn Mondelez/Nabisco about Offshoring Jobs

A group of 17 Senators recently sent a [letter](#) to **Irene Rosenfeld**, the CEO of snack conglomerate Mondelez international, criticizing the company's move of bakeries and jobs from the United States to Mexico. The letter pointed to bakeries in Chicago and Philadelphia that were shut down

by the company and moved, and called on Mondelez to bring jobs back to factories in Chicago; Fairlawn, New Jersey; Richmond, Virginia; Atlanta; and Portland, Oregon.

Signing the letter were Democratic Leader **Charles Schumer** (NY) and Sens. **Tammy Baldwin** (WI), **Richard Blumenthal** (CT), **Cory Booker** (NJ), **Sherrod Brown** (OH), **Robert Casey, Jr.** (PA), **Tammy Duckworth** (IL), **Richard Durbin** (IL), **Mazie Hirono** (HI), **Tim Kaine** (VA), **Edward Markey** (MA), **Jeff Merkley** (OR), **Robert Menendez** (NJ), **Jack Reed** (RI), **Chris Van Hollen** (MD), **Mark Warner** (VA), and **Elizabeth Warren** (MA). In conclusion the senators wrote, "It is long past time for all corporations, including Mondelez, to end offshoring practices that foster an economic race to the bottom and put short-term profits ahead of American workers and their families."

The Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM), which represents workers at Mondelez plants, thanked the senators for their concern.

"Their action is a powerful statement and adds to the growing political, social and community-based support this campaign is generating across the country and around the globe to challenge Mondelez/Nabisco's corrosive business model that exploits workers and their communities across borders and oceans," [said](#) **David B. Durkee**, the President of the BCTGM.

"It is essential that our elected representatives stand up to these large corporations on behalf of American workers," added **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. "When any middle class jobs are shipped overseas for the profit of these corporations, all workers are threatened, and their retirement security is then jeopardized."

Please support the Mondelez/Nabisco workers by only buying products manufactured in the United States. Learn how to tell the difference in this [video](#).

Connecticut, Indiana Alliance Chapters Hold Conventions

The Connecticut Alliance held their bi-annual convention on Monday. Congresswoman **Elizabeth Etsy** and representatives from Senators Blumenthal's and **Chris Murphy's** offices spoke to attendees about mobilizing opposition to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) repeal bill in Congress. Connecticut AFL-CIO President **Lori Pelletier** urged attendees to contact their state representatives about the state budget stalemate. The keynote speaker was labor attorney **Dan Livingston**. **Roger Boudreau**, northeast region board member, also made remarks.

Alliance Field Manager **Maureen Dunn** swore in the elected executive officers: President **Bette Marafino**, Executive Vice-President **Win Heimer**, Corresponding Secretary **Mary Elia**, Recording Secretary **Joelle Fishman**, Treasurer **Flo Martin**, and Assistant Treasurer **Kevin Lynch**. The conference was also treated to the musical stylings of "The Raging Grannies."

The Indiana Alliance for Retired Americans Convention was held in Indianapolis on Wednesday. The 75 delegates re-elected **Elmer Blankenship** as President. They also elected **Ron Long** 1st V. P.; **Terry Fisher** 2nd V.P.; **Larry Ryan** 3rd V.P.; **Dorine Godinez** as Recording Secretary; **Brenda Smith** as Finance Secretary; **Dick Merren** and **Harry Faust** as Trustees, and Board members **Ann Latcha**, **Midge Collett**, **Mike Merrel**, **John Cardwell**, **Dan Skinner**, **Jill Quackenbush**, and **David Jones**.



The newly-elected Indiana Alliance Board

Secretary-Treasurer Peters swore in the elected officers and also reported on issues affecting seniors and working families. **Brandon Heget** from Sen. **Joe Donnelly's** staff reported on the Senator's support for workers, veterans and families. **Rich Rankin**, recently elected Director of UAW Region 2B, and Alliance Midwest Board Member **Tim Foley** also spoke. Ms. Dunn reported on the ACA.

The Alliance for Retired Americans is a national organization that advocates for the rights and well-being of over 4.4 million retirees and their families.