Save Medicare and Medicaid

Advocacy Toolkit

January 2018

Alliance for Retired Americans
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Alliance for Retired Americans®

Dear State Presidents, Board Members, Alliance Personnel and Members,

On December 20, 2017, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed the Republican tax plan, H.R. 1, which provides a permanent and massive tax giveaway to corporations and wealthy Americans. The plan will be partially paid for by taking away health insurance from 13 million Americans. The bill will also increase the deficit by $1.5 trillion. To make matters worse, this tax bill is part of a two-step process. Republicans plan to use the increased debt as a reason to go after our earned benefits in 2018. Both Medicare and Medicaid are likely to be on the chopping block.

We are asking you to take action during the month of February by setting up lobbying visits. During these visits, it is important to get a commitment from your Member of Congress that they will not cut Medicare or Medicaid. We are also asking you, your affiliates and allies to call members of the House and Senate, respectively, during the first and second full weeks of the month, and instructing them not to cut Medicare or Medicaid in 2018.

To assist with these efforts, we have assembled a toolkit included here. In it, you will find tools to assist in your work. We are also asking that you share this toolkit with your state boards, affiliates, local chapters, activists, and allies so that they too can participate in mobilization. Included in the toolkit you will find a PowerPoint presentation to help you and your activists explain this process to members and allies. You can access and share all these materials by using the Google Drive found through this link. (need the link)

For more information on the Save Medicare and Medicaid Campaign, please contact Brendan Kelly in the mobilization department at bkelly@retiredamericans.org.

Thank you for your leadership.

Richard J. Fiesta

Richard J. Fiesta
Executive Director

SAVE MEDICARE & MEDICAID
ACTION CALENDAR

February 2018

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	February 5 - 9: House National Call-In Days					
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	February 12 - 16: Senate National Call-In Days					
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
February 17-25: House and Senate Recess—Lobby Visits and Town Halls						
	Presidents Day					Working People's Day of Action
25	26	27	28	1	2	3

Senate Budget for FY 2018

Fact Sheet

On October 26, 2017, the House of Representatives passed the fiscal year 2018 budget as amended by the Senate by a vote of 216-212. This legislation paves the way for the Republican leadership to move forward on tax reform. Unfortunately, this spending blueprint seeks to balance the budget on the backs of middle-income and working class Americans. Spending will be cut by $5.1 trillion over 10 years, decimating domestic programs but not closing any brazen tax loopholes or requiring the wealthy to pay their fair share.

PAVES THE WAY FOR TAX CUTS FOR THE RICH

The legislation lays the groundwork for Congress to begin overhauling the tax system using the fast track budget reconciliation process, which requires just 51 votes to pass the Senate. According to the Tax Policy Center, by 2027, 80% of the reforms proposals outlined by Speaker Paul Ryan and the Trump Administration would go to the wealthiest 1% of taxpayers and corporations.

CUTS TO MEDICARE & MEDICAID

The budget blueprint will require $473 billion in cuts to Medicare and over $1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid. While the appropriations bill to fund the government in 2018, expected later this year, may not contain Medicare and Medicaid cuts, the House leadership has indicated that they plan to make those cuts in 2019. Further, the budget will put pressure on both the Medicare and Medicaid programs, which will justify future cuts.

INCREASES THE DEFICIT

Speaker Ryan and the Senate leadership had promised that their tax proposal would be revenue neutral; this resolution will allow it to increase the deficit by $1.5 trillion.

HUGE CUTS IN DOMESTIC SPENDING

Non-defense discretionary (NDD) spending would be cut by $632 billion. NDD includes education and job training, transportation, scientific and medical research, protecting the food and water supply, childcare, low-income housing assistance and services for older Americans. The budget set NDD funding at its lowest level relative to the share of the economy since 1962.

How the New Tax Law Affects Retirees
Fact Sheet

On December 22, 2017, President Trump signed H.R. 1 into law, giving permanent and massive tax cuts to corporations and wealthy Americans. The tax cuts are partially funded by eliminating health insurance for 13 million Americans and limiting tax deductions that benefit lower and middle-income Americans. The new tax law is estimated to increase the deficit by $1.5 trillion.

ENDS THE INDIVIDUAL MANDATE
The new tax law ends the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate, which will cause an estimated 13 million Americans to lose health insurance coverage. It will also lead to higher insurance premiums, especially for the 3.3 million people ages 50-64 who purchase their insurance through the health exchanges.

LIMITING STATE, LOCAL & PROPERTY TAX DEDUCTIONS
Prior to enactment of the new law, taxpayers could deduct any state and local income, sales or property tax they pay on their federal tax form. Beginning in 2018, taxpayers will only be able to deduct up to $10,000 for state and local income and sales tax, including property taxes. This affects many middle-income individuals, including seniors, whose homes are their greatest assets. This will also hurt communities who rely on state and local taxes to fund services for their residents.

AUTOMATIC CUTS TO MEDICARE
Since the new tax law significantly increases the federal deficit, it triggers PAYGO, a budget rule requiring across-the-board cuts to many mandatory programs, including Medicare. PAYGO requires $410 billion in cuts to Medicare over 10 years, with $25 billion in cuts in 2018. While Congress included a provision waiving the cuts in 2018 in the resolution funding the government, there is no certainty for 2019. Furthermore, the increased deficit will continue to put pressure on Congress to make cuts to Medicare, as well as Medicaid and several other government assistance programs that help low-income seniors. House Speaker Paul Ryan has said that he wants to pass legislation to make significant cuts to these programs during 2018.

INSTITUTING THE CHAINED CPI
The new tax law requires that the chained CPI, a lower measure of inflation, be used to calculate tax brackets and the standard deduction. Congressional Republicans may push legislation requiring that the chained CPI also be used to calculate cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for Social Security beneficiaries. Using the chained CPI to calculate COLAS, will lead to a benefit cut to seniors and disabled beneficiaries.

LIMITS MORTGAGE INTEREST DEDUCTIONS
Prior to enactment of the new tax law, homeowners could deduct the interest paid on home mortgages up to a $1 million. The tax law will limit the mortgage interest deduction to $750,000. This provision will reduce the ability of many homeowners, including older Americans, living in expensive real estate markets to write off their mortgage interest.

Talking Points
Tax Cuts & Retirees

Congress should keep its hands off Our Medicare & Medicaid and oppose any cuts!

Do NOT cut Medicare to pay for the recently enacted tax cut or to reduce the deficit.

The recently enacted Republican tax plan provides tax cuts for corporations and wealthy Americans and increases the deficit by $1.5 trillion over 10 years. Since the tax cuts are not fully paid for, it triggers the PAYGO law, which requires across-the-board cuts in many mandatory programs, including Medicare. The PAYGO cuts to Medicare will total $410 billion over 10 years, including $25 billion in 2018.

While Congress waived the $25 billion cut due in 2018, there is no certainty that they will waive the cuts next year or the year after. **Tell your Member of Congress to protect Medicare and vote against any cuts.**

Increased deficits from the tax cuts will also provide Congress with excuses to make cuts to Medicare. Speaker Ryan and numerous Republican leaders have indicated their desire to enact Medicare and Medicaid cuts next.

Do NOT cut funding for nursing home or home care to pay huge giveaways to the wealthy and big corporations.

Medicaid covers 62% of all long-term care costs in the United States. Slashing funding to states by one-quarter will harm seniors and people with disabilities who rely on the program for their nursing home and home care costs.

The typical person on Medicaid is a woman, over the age of 65, living in a long-term care facility.

The recently passed budget for FY 2018 calls for more than $1 trillion in cuts to Medicaid, the health care safety net for low-income women, children, seniors and people with disabilities. **Tell your member of Congress to keep their hands off Medicaid.**

Alliance for Retired Americans®

Talking Points
Tax Cuts & Retirees

The Trump Administration has changed Medicaid's guaranteed benefits by encouraging states to apply for waivers to voluntarily charge premiums, insist on work requirements or require a waiting period. This is being done to save money in the Medicaid program. Congress should not mandate that states implement these changes.

Congress should keep its hands off Our Social Security and Oppose any Cuts!

The recently enacted Republican tax plan uses the chained CPI – a lower measure of inflation -- to calculate tax brackets and the standard deductions. Republicans may try to push legislation that would require that the chained CPI should be used to calculate Social Security cost-of-living adjustments (COLA)s. Using the chained CPI to calculate Social Security COLAS will result in a benefit cut. **Tell your member of Congress to oppose cuts to Social Security, including instituting the chained CPI.**

Social Security is funded through workers and employers' payroll contributions and does not add to the deficit. Congress should not cut Social Security benefits or raise the retirement age to reduce the deficit.

Congress should keep its hands off government programs that help low-income seniors and oppose any benefit cuts!

The new Republican tax law, which increases the deficit by $1.5 trillion over 10 years, is putting pressure on other government assistance programs. Speaker Ryan has promised to make cuts to these programs under the guise of "welfare reform." Many of these programs help keep low-income seniors out-of-poverty and put food on the table, including the Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which provides monetary assistance, and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), which provides nutrition assistance.

More than 4.8 million seniors currently receive nutrition assistance and another 1.2 million seniors are food insecure. Any cuts to SNAP will be devastating for millions of low-income seniors.

AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

AFL-CIO TAX REFORM PRINCIPLES

1. BIG CORPORATIONS AND THE WEALTHY MUST PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE OF TAXES.

- Our rigged and broken tax system lets big corporations and the wealthy avoid paying their fair share of taxes, sticking the rest of us with the tab.
- Tax reform must not cut taxes for big corporations or the wealthy.
- On the contrary, tax reform should restore taxes on the wealthiest estates and tax the income of investors as much as the income of working people.
- Tax reform must make our tax system more progressive than it is now.
- Big corporations and the wealthy must pay more in taxes than they pay now, so we can build an economy that works for all of us.

2. TAX REFORM MUST RAISE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE REVENUE.

- Tax reform must raise enough additional revenue over the long term to create good jobs and make the public investment we need in education, infrastructure, and meeting the needs of children, families, seniors and communities.
- Any tax reform that reduces revenues in the short term or the long term is unacceptable.
- Cost estimates must be honest and not rely on gimmicks that hide the true long-term cost of tax cuts.

3. TAX REFORM MUST ELIMINATE THE TAX INCENTIVE FOR CORPORATIONS TO SHIFT JOBS AND PROFITS OFFSHORE.

- Taxing offshore profits less than domestic profits creates an incentive for corporations to shift jobs and profits offshore, while giving global corporations a competitive advantage over domestic corporations.
- Tax reform must eliminate the tax incentive for corporations to shift jobs and profits offshore, which would raise nearly $1 trillion over 10 years.
- A "territorial" system that further reduces taxes on offshore profits would increase the tax incentive for global corporations to shift jobs and profits offshore.
- Tax reform must encourage investment in domestic manufacturing, production and employment to ensure a robust manufacturing sector.

4. GLOBAL CORPORATIONS MUST PAY WHAT THEY OWE ON PAST PROFITS HELD OFFSHORE.

- Global corporations owe an estimated $700 billion in taxes on the $2.6 trillion in past profits they are holding offshore.
- Tax reform should use these one-time-only tax revenues to increase smart public investment in infrastructure rather than cut corporate tax rates permanently.
- The higher the tax rate on these accumulated offshore earnings, the more funding will be available for public investment in infrastructure.

Review: New Tax Law
Handout

The GOP Agenda: Congressional Republicans passed a new tax law that increases the deficit by $1.5 trillion. House Speaker Paul Ryan plans to cut Medicare, Medicaid, and other government assistance programs to pay for it.

Bottom Lines

- Corporations got **permanent** tax cuts
- The rich got huge tax breaks
- Middle income taxpayers got small, **temporary**, tax cuts (until 2025)
- Decreases federal revenue by **$2 trillion**
- **Increases the deficit by $1.5 trillion**
- Eliminated most itemized deductions that affect lower-income workers
- Creates conditions that may lead to **Medicare and Medicaid cuts**

Cutting Corporate Taxes

President Trump and Speaker Ryan claim corporate taxes are too high.

- Effective rate was actually just 14%, and **26 corporations paid zero in taxes in 2010.**
- Corporate rate was reduced from 35% to 21%
- Multinational corporations that owe more than $700 billion in taxes got a huge tax break by eliminating taxes on their overseas profits entirely, in exchange for a one-time low-rate tax payment on their current obligations.

Breaks to 'Pass Through' Entities

Hedge Funds and Wall Street firms incorporate as `Pass Through' entities. This allows them to pay corporate taxes at the individual tax rate.

- Hedge fund managers, private equity firms, and the Trump Organization receive huge tax cuts by being able to deduct 20% of their income up to incomes of $315,000 for couples or $157,500 for individuals.
- Higher income pass through owners can still deduct a percentage their business income

President Trump owns 500 "pass through" entities.

Tax Breaks for the Rich

- The top tax rate is reduced from 39.6% to 37%.
- Estates worth $11 million are exempt from taxation (previously, estates worth $5.5 million were exempt).

Middle Class at Risk

- Limits State and Local Tax Deductions, including property taxes, to $10,000
- Takes health insurance away from 13 million Americans
- Uses Chained CPI to calculate tax brackets and standard deductions. This will force many middle-income taxpayers into a higher tax bracket in the future.
- Caps mortgage Interest deduction at mortgage debt of $750,000 (previously $1 million)

Alliance *for* Retired Americans

I Pledge to oppose any Member of Congress who votes in favor of cuts to Medicare, Medicaid or government assistance programs that help low-income seniors to pay for new tax law or reduce the deficit.

Name		Signature	
Address	City	State	ZIP
E-Mail	Cell Phone *	Home Phone	

Name		Signature	
Address	City	State	ZIP
E-Mail	Cell Phone *	Home Phone	

Name		Signature	
Address	City	State	ZIP
E-Mail	Cell Phone *	Home Phone	

Name		Signature	
Address	City	State	ZIP
E-Mail	Cell Phone *	Home Phone	

Name		Signature	
Address	City	State	ZIP
E-Mail	Cell Phone *	Home Phone	

* By providing your cell phone number you agree to receive automated calls and text messages from the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Alliance for Retired Americans

ACTION HOTLINE
Tax and Budgets

National Call-In Days

House National Call-In Days

Monday-Friday, February 5th-9th Call the House of Representatives

(866) 828-4162

Senate National Call-In Day

Monday-Friday, February 12th-16th Call the Senate

Tell your Member of Congress and Senator to
Oppose cuts to Medicare, Medicaid or government assistance
for low-income seniors to pay for the next tax law.

For more information, visit RetiredAmericans.org

Alliance for Retired Americans

Lobby Toolkit
How to Structure your Medicare and Medicaid Lobby Visit

How to Structure Your Congressional Meetings

1) Identify Yourself and the Group You Represent.

Make sure the elected official knows who is in the room, and is clear about the Alliance's electoral power in the legislator's district. Leave with the legislator or staff member with the 'Medicare Card' leave behind.

2) Get the Meeting Started – Be Aware of the Time!

Meetings usually are 45 minutes or less. Pay attention to the time. After introductions, say why you wanted to meet with the Member and what you hope to gain from the meeting.

3) State Your Position Clearly.

Tell the elected official the key facts on your issue, being sensitive to what this particular legislator is interested in. Be clear and specific about what your position is on the issue. For example, do not just ask that the official to support Medicare. Ask them to oppose specific changes to Medicare, such as privatization, vouchers and benefit cuts.

4) Get the Elected Official to Take Action.

Ask specific questions including how your elected official stands on your issue. Ask for a clear position on your issue, and do not give up until you have an unmistakable "yes" or "no." If the legislator is supporting you, ask for a specific action in support – such as holding a press conference with Alliance members.

5) Take pictures!

Take a picture of yourself before the meeting – using their name plate as a backdrop. Ask the member or the staff member if you can take a picture together. Post to Facebook and email copies to the Alliance in Washington, D.C.

5) Debrief.

Talk about how your meetings went, come to agreement on the minutes and what happened in the meeting, and discuss how you could refine your message in the future. Fill out the Lobby Report Back Form either online or on paper and get back to the national Alliance as soon as possible. This information is critical to our work advocating on behalf of retirees.

6) Follow Up.

Write letters thanking the elected officials for their time and reminding them of commitments made to you during the meetings. Include any additional information they requested in the meetings. A sample letter is attached.

ALLIANCE TAX AND BUDGET DISTRICT MEETINGS
LOBBY REPORT BACK FORM

Member's State, District, and Name Visited: ____________________

Member or staff in visit: ____________________

Participants in meeting: ____________________

Member's or staff's response to Alliance talking points, personal stories:

CIRCLE RESPONSE FROM MEMBER OR STAFF

ISSUE	SUPPORTS ALLIANCE ON ISSUE	OPPOSES ALLIANCE ON ISSUE	UNDECIDED
MEDICARE	Opposes cutting Medicare to pay for recently enacted tax bill	Supports cutting Medicare to pay for recently enacted tax bill	Undecided
MEDICAID	Opposes cutting Medicaid to pay for recently enacted tax bill	Supports cutting Medicaid to pay for recently enacted tax bill	Undecided
SOCIAL SECURITY	Opposes cutting Social Security, including through the chained CPI	Supports cutting Social Security, including through the chained CPI	Undecided
SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME (SSI)	Opposes cutting SSI benefits, including block granting	Supports cutting SSI benefits, including block granting	Undecided
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITIONAL ASSISTANCE (SNAP)	Opposes cutting SNAP benefits, including block granting	Supports cutting SNAP benefits, including block granting	Undecided
OLDER AMERICANS ACT	Opposes cutting programs for older Americans to pay for recently enacted tax bill	Supports cutting programs for older Americans to pay for recently enacted tax bill	Undecided

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: mcampbell@retiredamericans.org**.**
Your reports help our Government Affairs Department lobby more strategically in DC.