



## Expanding Social Security

For decades, Social Security has delivered guaranteed benefits on time and without interruption to millions of Americans. Americans earn their Social Security benefits, contributing into the system with every paycheck.

These benefits are essential to all who rely on them, including seniors, people with disabilities and families of deceased workers.

Today 65 million Americans -- one out of every five households -- relies on Social Security's lifetime, guaranteed benefits.

To continue to provide retirement security for current and future generations, it is time to strengthen and expand Social Security and increase benefits. Many members of Congress recognize the need for action and are proposing legislation that will ensure the Social Security system remains strong and Americans receive the benefits they have earned.

### Alliance for Retired Americans Position

The Alliance for Retired Americans strongly supports legislation introduced in Congress that increases Social Security benefits, extends the solvency of Social Security and repeals the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). We believe a practical and fair way to accomplish this is to lift the cap on Social Security payroll taxes above the current \$160,200 and require that wealthy Americans pay their fair share of taxes into the system.

### Social Security Expansion Act

The Social Security Expansion Act, S. 393, introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT), in the Senate and H.R. 1046, introduced by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), in the House, expands Social Security and increases benefits by requiring that wealthy Americans pay their fair share.

This legislation would extend the solvency of Social Security for 75 years by lifting the cap and subjecting all income above \$250,000 to the Social Security payroll tax.

The bill increases the Cost-of-Living-Adjustments to more accurately measure the spending patterns for seniors by adopting the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E). It also expands Social Security benefits across the board for current and new beneficiaries, increasing benefits by \$200 per month.

It improves the Special Minimum Benefit for Social Security recipients, restores student benefits up to age 22 for children of disabled or deceased workers, and combines the Disability Insurance Trust Fund with the Old Age and Survivors Trust Fund so that all Americans receive the benefits they have earned.

## **The Safeguarding American Families and Expanding (SAFE) Social Security Act**

The SAFE Social Security Act, which is on the verge of formal introduction by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), will increase Social Security beneficiaries' monthly benefits by \$125 per month. This legislation will also ensure that cost of living adjustments adequately reflect the living expenses of retirees, extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, and remove the wage cap to ensure all Americans contribute equally.

Key benefits of the legislation include:

- Phasing out the payroll tax cap so that payroll taxes apply fairly to every dollar of wages earned;
- Updating the annual COLA to better reflect the real costs that seniors face through the use of the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly;
- Guaranteeing a new minimum benefit so that lower income seniors receive enough to survive;
- Rewarding caregiving by providing a credit towards future social security payments;
- Ensuring that any increase in benefits would not harm an individual's eligibility or cause a reduction in their SSI, Medicaid or CHIP benefits;
- Eliminating the waiting period for disability insurance and surviving spousal benefits;
- Increasing the Net Investment Income Tax (NIIT) to extend the solvency of the Trust Fund to 2050.

## **The Social Security Enhancement and Protection Act**

The Social Security Enhancement and Protection Act, H.R. 671, introduced by Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), makes key reforms to strengthen and improve program benefits to augment Social Security's ability to protect vulnerable Americans living in poverty. The legislation accomplishes this by eliminating the cap on Social Security payroll contributions, while also improving the program's special minimum benefit to better support low-income workers. The bill, which recognizes that the provision of child care is also hard work, allows the years in which a parent provides care for a young child to count as a year of coverage for determining an individual's Social Security benefits.

Additionally, the legislation reinstates benefits for students up to age 26 who are children of retired, deceased, or disabled workers. It also increases benefits for all beneficiaries 20 years after retirement, providing economic stability to the eldest among our nation's senior population.

## Social Security Fairness Act

The Social Security Fairness Act, H.R. 82, introduced by Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) and Rep. Abigail Spanberger (D-VA), repeals the GPO and the WEP.

The WEP affects nearly two million public sector retirees with public pensions, while the GPO reduces by two-thirds the spousal or survivor benefits of nearly 800,000 retirees who collect a public pension. These are outdated provisions that deprive educators and other public employees of the benefits they have earned and the secure retirement they deserve. Moreover, eliminating the WEP and GPO would also serve as a tremendous financial boost not only to seniors but for the United States' economy overall, given that seniors support tens of millions of jobs and contribute trillions of dollars annually to the nation's economy.