



Social Security – Our Earned Benefits

**Alliance for
Retired Americans
2023**

Video



Social Security
Our Earned Benefits

Social Security 101



65.2 Million Beneficiaries



50.2 million receive retiree benefits

5.9 million receive survivors' benefits including more than 4 million children

8.9 million receive disability benefits

Primary Income Source for Most Older Americans

- For 1/3 of current beneficiaries – **90%** of income is from Social Security
- For 2/3 of current beneficiaries – **50%** of income is from Social Security
- Average Monthly Benefits are Modest

Retired worker **\$1,677**

Retired couple **\$2,753**

Disabled Worker **\$1,364**



Younger Workers and Social Security

9% of millennials have received Social Security because their working parent died, became disabled, or retired

A young person starting a career today has a **30% chance of being disabled before 67**

Social Security likely to provide **most younger Americans' income in old age**
Lack of traditional pensions; only 1/3 have a retirement savings plan at work

65% of people 18-29 want NO reduction in Social Security, but only 15% believe Social Security will have enough money to provide benefits at current levels

How is Social Security Funded

Worker + Employer each contribute 6.2% of every paycheck

2023 Contributions are capped at \$160,200 per year, per employee

Bond interest and tax revenue on high-earner beneficiaries



Benefits Are Guaranteed

- Benefits are calculated on a person's lifetime earnings, and are guaranteed no matter how long they live



Does Not Add to National Debt

- Social Security cannot spend more than is in its Trust Funds or borrow money
- Should funds become depleted in the future, benefits would be reduced



Social Security is Solvent

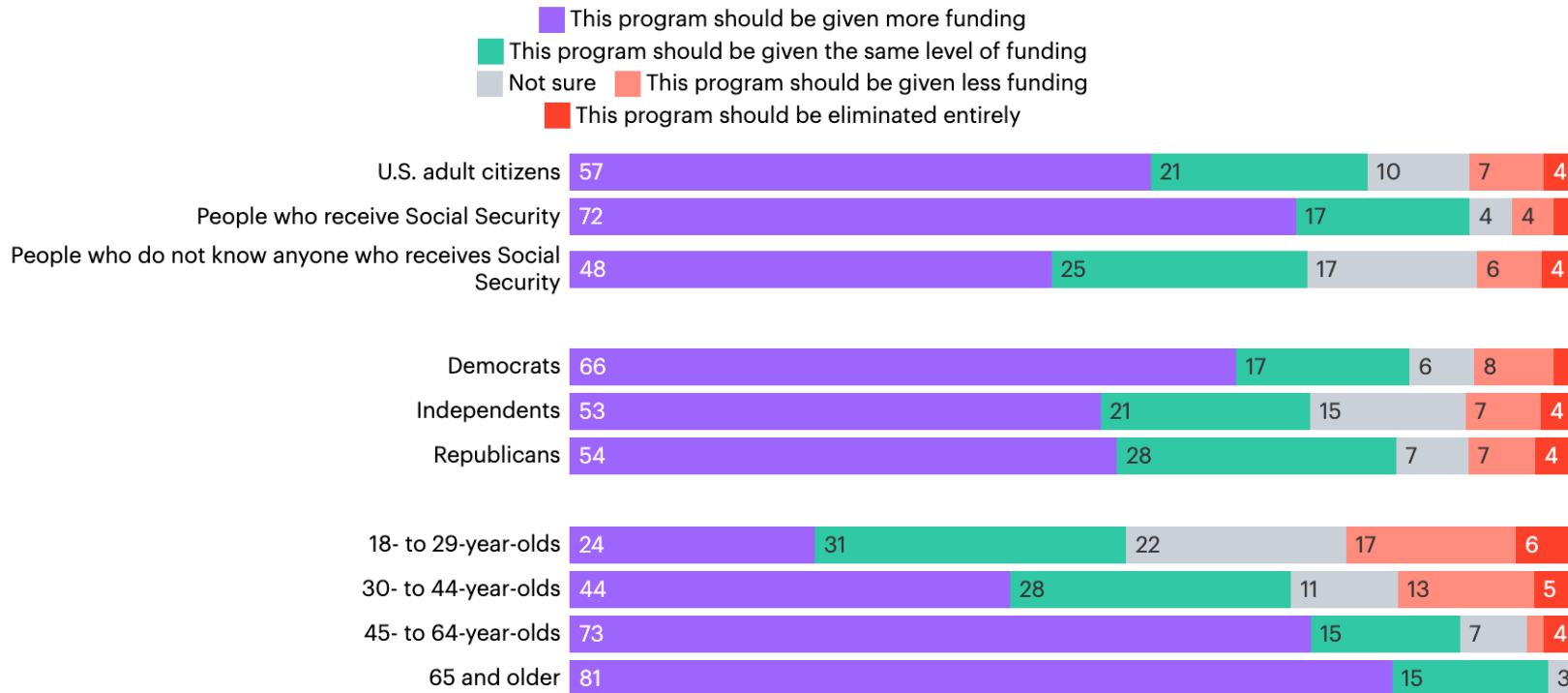
- Can pay full benefits for the next decade
- If nothing changes, Social Security can pay **77%** of scheduled benefits after 2033



Social Security Has Broad Public Support

Most Americans say Social Security should be given more funding

Thinking about the following U.S. program, do you believe they should be given more or less funding? **Social Security** (%)



YouGov®

January 5 - 9, 2023

**78% of ALL
Citizens Say
Social Security
Should
Receive the
Same or
MORE
Funding**

Lift Or Eliminate Cap on Contributions

Strengthen the
Trust Fund

Provide Revenue to
Increase Benefits

Ensure Social
Security is There for
Current and Future
Beneficiaries

Restores Fairness



Other Changes Needed to Improve Social Security

- Repeal WEP-GPO Provisions so public sector retirees receive all earned Social Security Benefits
- Change the Cost-of-Living Adjustment formula to Better Reflect What Seniors Spend Money On (CPI-E)
- Provide Social Security Work Credits for Caregivers



Political Threats Are Real

Washington Post | January 24, 2023

House GOP eyes Social Security, Medicare amid spending battle

Republicans have pledged to cut spending and balance the budget.

HuffPost | March 1, 2023

Bipartisan Senate Group Mulls Social Security Investment Fund, Higher Retirement Age

would be highly controversial and Congress is not likely to

CNBC | March 4, 2023

As Social Security reform talks heat up, changes to the retirement age, payroll tax may be on the table

Raising the Retirement Age

Sen. Lindsey Graham: "...To get out of this mess, people like me are going to have to take a little less and pay a little more in. **We're going to have to adjust the age one more time** like Ronald Reagan and Tip — Tip O'Neil did. ..."

Sen. Mitt Romney: "...you have to recognize that **life expectancy is a lot more today...**"



Are Americans Living Longer?

Average American's Life Expectancy is 76 years

BUT Americans with lower-incomes do not live as long as those with high incomes

Men in the top 10% in household income could expect to live to 88, while those in the bottom 10% could expect to live to just 76

Life Expectancy Varies Significantly by Race

White Americans – 76.4 years

Black Americans – 70.8 years



Raising the Retirement Age is a CUT

Example – Single Retired Worker Receiving the Average Yearly Benefit
Amount Who Lives to Age 76

Age of Retirement	Yearly benefits	Lifetime benefits received until death at age 76	Reduction
67	\$20,124	\$181,116	–
68	\$20,124	\$160,992	-\$20,124
69	\$20,124	\$140,868	-\$40,248
70	\$20,124	\$120,744	-\$60,372

Privatization Schemes

Give All or Part of Trust Fund to Wall Street

- NO Guarantee of Better Returns; Risk of Losses
- Investment companies Would Make Billions in Commissions and Fees

Allow or Require Individuals to Create Private Accounts in Lieu of Guaranteed Benefits

- Drains Money From the Trust Fund for Current Beneficiaries
- Ends Guaranteed Earned Benefits
- Private Investment Companies Profit from Commissions and Fees



“TRUST Act” / Special Commissions

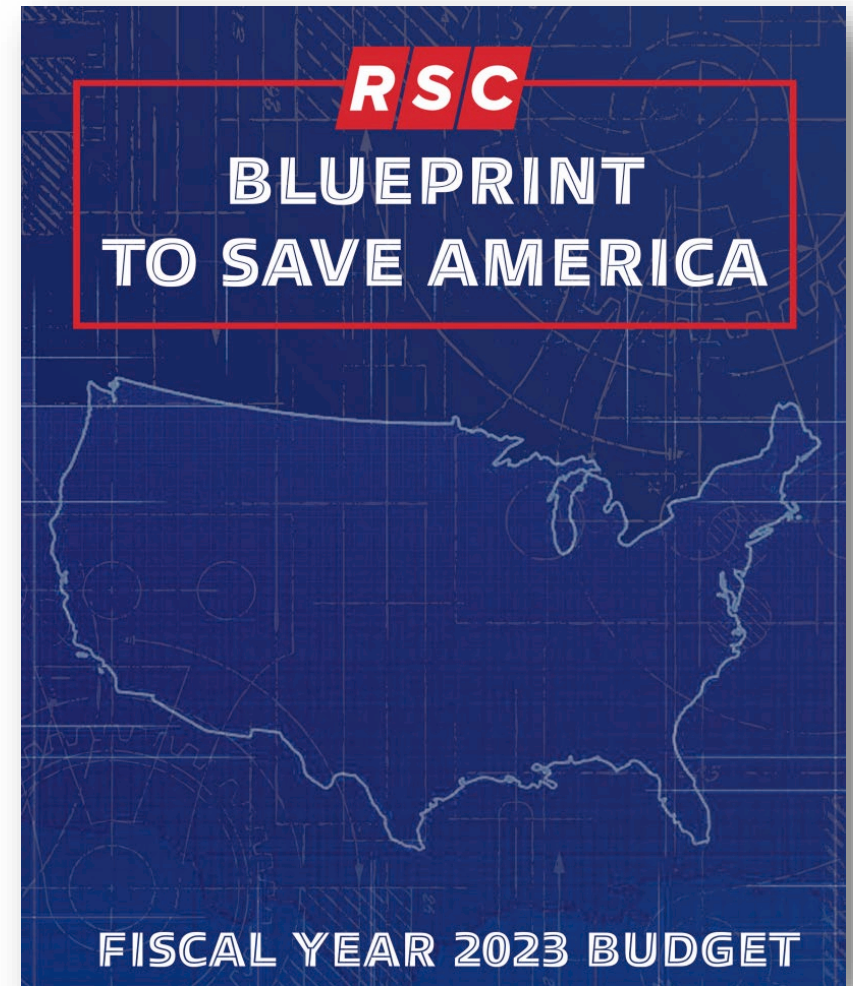
- “Expert Commissions” start from the idea that Social Security *Must be Changed*
- Drastically Limit the Public’s Input
- Provide Political “Cover” to Politicians
- The “TRUST Act” even establishes “**rescue committees**” to meet behind closed doors and develop recommendations to improve solvency



House Members Proposed Changes in 2022

House Republican Study Committee

- “Blueprint to Save America”
- Raise the retirement age
- **Withhold payments** to early retirees and/or higher earners
- Allow private accounts
- Endorsed by **157** House members in 2022



Fight Back

Step 1: Sign Our Petition

Demanding NO CUTS to Social Security

Step 2: Get Involved with
YOUR Alliance
retiredamericans.org/join



Questions? Comments?

www.retiredamericans.org

Increasing the Debt Ceiling

- We support increasing the debt ceiling with NO strings attached.
- We will not stand for any harmful cuts to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid or critical social programs funded by the government in exchange for raising the debt ceiling limit.
- As retirees we have earned our Social Security and Medicare benefits after a lifetime of hard work. These are earned benefits that ensure older Americans receive necessary income and health care after retirement.
- Social Security benefits more than 66 million Americans: nearly 50% of retired Americans depend on Social Security for half of their income, while one in four over age 65 relies on Social Security for 90% of their income.
- Medicare guarantees quality health care coverage to over 64 million older Americans.
- Both Social Security and Medicare are earned benefits, not government handouts, and should absolutely not be cut or compromised.
- The Alliance demands that Congress reject the threats to cut Social Security, Medicare and other critical social programs for seniors.
- We believe that Congress must not, under any circumstances, allow MAGA Republicans to dictate destructive policies that would be harmful not only to seniors but to all Americans.

WEP/GPO Repeal

- We strongly urge members of Congress to cosponsor and pass H.R. 82, the Social Security Fairness Act, introduced by Reps. Sam Graves and Abigail Spanberger to repeal the Social Security Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO).
- The terribly unfair WEP and GPO provisions reduce Social Security benefits for public sector retirees who receive a public pension or the spouse or survivor of a Social Security beneficiary who worked for a period of time in a job not covered by the Social Security program.



2023 OAM Toolkit

Lobby Visit Talking Points

- The affected retirees dedicated their lives to public service and include public school teachers, police officers, postal workers, firefighters and certain federal, state and local government employees.
- More than 2.5 million Social Security beneficiaries are affected by one or both of these provisions.
- Those affected do not receive the full Social Security benefits that they otherwise earned. The WEP and GPO disproportionately affect lower-income workers and women, and as a result, many face economic hardship during retirement.



2023 OAM Toolkit Lobby Visit Report Back Form

Click [here](#) to fill out this form online.

Representative's Name, State and District: _____

Representative or staff in visit: _____

Alliance Participants in Meeting: _____

CIRCLE RESPONSE FROM MEMBER OR STAFF

ISSUE	PRO-RETIREE POSITION	ANTI-RETIREE POSITION	UNDECIDED
Social Security	Supports protecting and expanding Social Security. Opposes any cuts to our earned benefits.	Supports cuts including raised eligibility age, privatization, means testing, benefit cuts, Trust Act.	Undecided
Medicare	Supports protecting and expanding Medicare. Opposes any cuts to our earned benefits.	Supports cuts including raised eligibility age, privatization, means testing, benefit cuts.	Undecided
Debt Ceiling	Supports a clean debt ceiling increase with NO strings attached.	Only supports debt ceiling increase with conditions attached.	Undecided
WEP/GPO	Supports the repeal of WEP/GPO & restoring spousal and survivor benefits.	Opposes the restoration of earned Social Security benefits.	Undecided

Follow-up commitments from the Representative's office: _____

Follow-up commitments from the Alliance participants: _____

Any follow-up needs from the national Alliance: _____

Please fill out and submit immediately using the online [Lobby Visit Report Back Form](#) or via email to Mobilization@RetiredAmericans.org.



2023 Older Americans Month Toolkit Event Planning Guide

Keep Your Promise Events

Social Security and Medicare represent a promise that the government made to the American people since 1935 and 1965 respectively. Republicans are threatening to hold the United States economy hostage by refusing to raise the debt limit until their demands for cuts to our hard-earned benefits are met. Retirees must speak out and demand that Congress keeps its **hands off of Medicare and Social Security**.

To help make your events more impactful, we've created some fantastic new materials that you can use, including Rally Signs, a petition, a postcard, and a template event flier. Our 2022 Congressional Voting Record is also a great tool to use to plan Retiree Hero certificate presentations and Retiree Zero actions for those who voted against retirees' interests.

The list of Alliance materials and order form are available [on our website](#). Alliance staff are available and eager to help you plan your event! Please reach out to mobilization@retiredamericans.org to get started.

Events

The Alliance for Retired Americans encourages retirees to plan rallies or protests at key Members of Congress' offices calling on them to pass a clean debt ceiling limit raise with no cuts or strings attached.

Possible Event Agenda

- Welcome participants
- Remarks from Alliance State President
- Remarks from retiree champion Member of Congress/guest speaker
- Social Security/Medicare Storytellers call upon elected officials to preserve their earned benefits.

Media Coverage

Alliance communications staff will help with media turnout and prepare press releases.

Event Turnout

Alliance staff can provide phone bank lists, invitation emails, and social media invites, and help strategize ways to build the biggest possible crowds for your event.

Materials Needed

- **Camera Phone** (and designated event photographer/videographer)
- **Rally Signs/Placards** Contact the Alliance to have signs shipped to your location before the event

- **Extra Large Sharpies** The Alliance will ship large Sharpie markers with your “Hands Off” rally sign orders. Please make sure to use them to write on the signs, as smaller markers may make the signs hard to read in photos.
- **Keep Your Promise Petition** to circulate to attendees
- **Sign in sheets/pens/clipboards**
- **Alliance Banner and T-Shirts**

Pictures

In order to make your event as impactful as possible, it is important to take high-quality, high resolution photos and share them with the national Alliance as soon as possible. We’ve included our Photography for Action photo guide in this toolkit as a refresher. Below are some examples of high-quality photos.



Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #1

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Nearly 66 million Americans - 1 out of every 4 households - rely on their hard earned Social Security benefits to make ends meet. That is why I am concerned any time Social Security is under attack.

GOP extremists in the U.S. House demanded that Speaker Kevin McCarthy commit to slashing Social Security in order to raise the debt limit. House Democratic Whip Katherine Clark was right when she said that these GOP plans amount to "taking our seniors hostage."

Congress must reject any attempts to use the debt limit as an excuse to cut this critical program. I strongly urge my Rep. _____ and my Senators _____ and _____ to vote for a clean debt limit increase with no cuts to Social Security.

It would be fantastic if this could be done by the end of May, which is Older Americans Month.

Sincerely yours,

[Your Name] [Your Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #2

[Date]

Dear Editor:

Social Security lifts more people out of poverty than any other program. Fifty-two million Americans rely on Social Security retirement benefits, and one in four Americans over age 65 relies on Social Security for 90% of their income.

Despite these indisputable facts, Republicans have made it clear that they intend to destroy Social Security. Holding the economy hostage during the debt ceiling debate isn't even enough for them anymore. Several GOP House members have publicly supported schemes that will further endanger earned benefits, like raising the retirement age.

As retirees, we have earned our Social Security benefits after a lifetime of hard work. We will not stand for any cuts for current or future retirees.

Let us honor seniors in May, which is Older Americans Month, by preventing MAGA Republicans from dictating destructive policies that would harm seniors and every American who wants to have a secure retirement.

Sincerely yours,
[Your Name] [Your Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #3

[Date]

Dear Editor:

As a bedrock of our retirement security, Social Security is not only essential, it is earned. Americans pay for these benefits throughout their life with every paycheck.

Still, many Republicans have pledged to cause our country to default on our national debt unless President Biden and Democrats agree to slash it.

Making matters worse, high profile GOP presidential candidates are pushing for policies that will translate into benefit cuts or privatization, like raising the retirement age.

May, which is Older Americans Month, is a great time for older Americans to tell Congress that Social Security is not up for grabs.

Sincerely yours,
[Your Name] [Your Address]

Sample Letter to the Editor: Social Security #4

[Date]

Dear Editor:

As a retired_____, I know how important Social Security is. It helps millions of retirees, people with disabilities, widows, and children who have lost a parent. One in four Americans over age 65 rely on Social Security for 90% of their income.

Despite these key facts, Republicans have told us over and over again that they will demand cuts to Social Security as the price of raising the debt limit. Doing this as Older Americans Month approaches in May is even more insulting.

This cannot stand. As retirees we have earned our Social Security benefits after a lifetime of hard work.

We must not, under any circumstances, allow extremist Republicans to dictate destructive policies that would harm not only seniors, but all Americans. I urge my Rep. _____ and my Senators _____ and _____ to vote for a clean debt limit increase with no cuts to Social Security.

Sincerely Yours,
[Name, Alliance position] [Address]

May 2023

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH

April '23							June '23						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1					1	2	3
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30	
30													

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day	30	31	1	2	3
4	5					

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