



## Accomplishments of 111<sup>TH</sup> Congress for America's Seniors

### **PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY FROM REPUBLICAN PRIVATIZATION PLANS**

- Social Security is once again under assault by Congressional Republicans.
- A number of key Republicans have proposed to privatize and cut Social Security – turning it over to the whims of Wall Street, just as President George W. Bush tried to do in 2005.
- If President Bush and the Republicans had succeeded in 2005, seniors would have lost trillions more in the stock market meltdown of the Bush recession – instead, no one lost a penny in Social Security.
- Social Security has been, for 75 years, a bedrock promise. Seniors have earned it with a lifetime of hard work, and it should be there for today's seniors and future generations.
- Democrats have kept privatization plans off the table this Congress and are working to strengthen Social Security. Social Security is not the cause of our budget deficits.

### **PROTECTING MEDICARE FROM REPUBLICAN "VOUCHER" PLANS**

- Congressional Republicans have a plan to turn Medicare into a voucher system, ending the government guarantee Americans pay into with a lifetime of work, and sending seniors out into the private insurance market to fend for themselves with a voucher that decreases in value each year.
- On April 2, 2009, Democrats defeated the House Republican budget plan, offered by Rep. Paul Ryan, Ranking Republican on the House Budget Committee. Nearly 80 percent of House Republicans voted in favor of the Ryan Medicare plan.
- Under the plan, all Americans under the age of 55 would not receive Medicare when they reached 65. Instead, they would receive a voucher with which to purchase private health insurance.
- Under the plan, the voucher would increase at an average annual rate of only one-half of the rate of increase in health care costs. Inevitably, the burden of rising health care costs would fall on seniors.
- The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the plan would cut projected Medicare spending by 37 percent by 2040, and by 76 percent by 2080. That's trillions of dollars that would not go to health care for seniors.
- The Ryan plan also called for cutting Medicare spending over the next 10 years by up to \$605 billion.  
**78% of House Republicans voted YES on Ryan plan to end Medicare as we know it**

### **IMPROVING HEALTH CARE FOR AMERICA'S SENIORS**

#### **AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (PL 111-148)**

- Saves millions of seniors up to thousands of dollars on their prescription drug costs each year by phasing out the Medicare prescription drug 'donut hole' coverage gap. In 2010, 4 million seniors who hit the donut hole are receiving a \$250 rebate check. Beginning in 2011, seniors who hit the donut hole will receive a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs, and the donut hole is completely closed by 2020.
- Beginning on January 1, 2011, provides that seniors will receive, under Medicare, free preventive services such as mammograms and certain colon cancer tests and a free annual physical.
- Strengthens Medicare by extending its solvency by an additional 12 years, from 2017 to 2029.

- Includes Medicare efficiencies, so that experts estimate that seniors will save on average nearly \$200 per year in premiums and over \$200 per year in co-payments in 2018 compared to what they would have paid without the new law.
  - Improves the quality of care by providing incentives, under Medicare, for doctors to work together to coordinate the care of the individual patient, particularly critical for chronic conditions like diabetes.
  - Creates a new voluntary long-term care insurance program called CLASS, which will provide a cash benefit to help seniors obtain services and supports that will help them to remain in their homes.
  - To help offset the cost of employer-based retiree health plans, creates a program to preserve those plans and help people who retire before age 65 get the affordable care they need.
  - Contains new tools to crack down on waste, fraud and abuse in Medicare – including strengthening the screenings of providers who want to participate in Medicare and strengthening criminal penalties.
  - Contains provisions to improve the quality of care in nursing homes, including facilitating the filing of complaints and establishing a nationwide program of background checks for employees in nursing homes.
- 100% of House Republicans voted NO

#### **PRESERVATION OF ACCESS TO CARE FOR MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES ACT (PL 111-192)**

- Ensures that seniors will continue to have access to the doctors of their choice under Medicare, by blocking a scheduled 21 percent cut in Medicare payments to physicians, which would have led to many doctors stopping seeing Medicare patients. The bill also updated physician payments by 2.2 percent.

#### **MEDICARE PREMIUM FAIRNESS ACT (H.R. 3631) – PASSED BY HOUSE**

- Would have ensured that all Medicare enrollees would be protected from an increase in the Medicare Part B premium in 2010 and that no seniors would see a cut in their Social Security checks.

#### **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (PL 111-5)**

- Ensures needed funding for long-term care by increasing the federal match for Medicaid through 2010, which is the key program for helping pay for long-term care for low-income seniors and seniors who have exhausted their retirement savings. Medicaid covers more than two-thirds of all nursing home residents.
  - Invests \$10 billion in critical health research, in order to advance research capable of making breakthroughs in the areas of such illnesses as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer, and heart disease.
  - Invests \$19 billion to accelerate the adoption of Health Information Technology (HIT) systems by doctors and hospitals, to modernize the health care system, save billions, reduce errors and improve quality.
- 100% of House Republicans voted NO

#### **EDUCATION JOBS AND MEDICAID ASSISTANCE ACT (PL 111-226)**

- Ensures needed funding for long-term care by extending enhanced federal match provisions for Medicaid, which is the nation's largest source of coverage for long-term care, through June 30, 2011. Medicaid covers more than two-thirds of all nursing home residents.
- 99% of House Republicans voted NO

### **REBUILDING THE ECONOMY AND SENIORS' ECONOMIC SECURITY**

#### **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (PL 111-5)**

- Put cash in the pockets of Social Security recipients – providing an automatic \$250 payment to every adult Social Security recipient in 2009.
- Invested \$120 million in emergency spending to create jobs for seniors in 2009 and 2010 – funding the Senior Community Service Employment Program, a program providing jobs for seniors with community service organizations. With the recession's impact on older workers, these additional funds have been needed to provide opportunities for tens of thousands of older workers.

- Is responsible for up to 3.3 million jobs nationwide through June 2010, according to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.
  - Has helped deliver a large swing in economic growth (a swing of 8.5 points -- from -6.8 percent in late 2008 to +1.7 percent), which has helped the stock market rise by 70 percent from its low in March 2009 – thereby stabilizing retirement savings.
- 100% of House Republicans voted NO**

#### **FY 2010 LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS ACT (PL 111-117)**

- Provides \$825 million for 2010, an increase of \$254 million above 2009, for the Senior Community Service Employment Program – providing unemployed adults over the age of 55 community service jobs.
- 100% of House Republicans voted NO**

#### **SMALL BUSINESS JOBS ACT (PL 111-240)**

- Creates up to 500,000 jobs, by leveraging \$300 billion in private sector loans primarily for small businesses through a new lending fund for community banks.
  - Includes \$12 billion in small business tax relief, including an extension of 50% bonus depreciation, raising the enhanced small business expensing limit to \$500,000, and providing a 100% exclusion of capital gains from taxes for investors in small businesses.
  - Is fully paid for by closing tax loopholes. Doesn't add a dime to the deficit.
- 99% of House Republicans voted NO**

#### **HIRING INCENTIVES TO RESTORE EMPLOYMENT (HIRE) ACT (PL 111-147)**

- Creates up to 300,000 jobs, by providing a payroll tax holiday for businesses that hire workers who have been unemployed for 60 days or longer and a tax credit for businesses that retain these workers.
  - Unleashes tens of billions of dollars to rebuild infrastructure to save or create 1 million American jobs.
  - Is fully paid for by cracking down on offshore accounts for the wealthy. Doesn't add a dime to the deficit.
- 97% of House Republicans voted NO**

#### **EDUCATION JOBS AND MEDICAID ASSISTANCE/PREVENTING OUTSOURCING ACT (PL 111-226)**

- Creates and saves approximately 319,000 jobs – saving 161,000 teacher jobs this school year and providing state aid that will create and save another 158,000 jobs, including police officers, firefighters, nurses, and private sector workers.
  - Is fully paid for by closing tax loopholes that encourage corporations to ship American jobs overseas.
- 99% of House Republicans voted NO**

### **STRENGTHENING CONSUMER PROTECTIONS**

#### **WALL STREET REFORM (PL 111-203)**

- Establishes a new independent watchdog agency that is able to act fast to:
  - ensure American consumers get the clear, accurate information they need to shop for mortgages, credit cards, student loans, payday loans and other financial products, and
  - protect them from hidden fees, abusive terms, and from unfair and deceptive practices.
- Reforms and strengthens the Security and Exchange Commission's ability to enforce securities laws, to help stop Bernie Madoff-type scams that caused seniors to lose their retirement savings. Big bank executives had engaged in reckless behavior at the expense of the retirement savings of many of America's seniors.
- Puts an end to taxpayer-funded bailouts and the idea of "too big to fail."
- "AARP supports this legislation because it will establish a watchdog that will protect Americans from getting a mortgage or credit card that has hidden fees that cause their bills to skyrocket; ensure

Americans get the clear, accurate information they need to shop for mortgages, credit cards and other financial products; and crack down on investment scams targeted at older Americans.”

98% of House Republicans voted NO

#### **CREDIT CARDHOLDERS’ BILL OF RIGHTS (PL 111-24)**

- Provides tough new protections for consumers – banning unfair rate increases and forbidding the abusive fees and penalties that credit card companies have inflicted on America’s seniors.

#### **ENSURING VITAL SERVICES FOR SENIORS**

##### **AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT (PL 111-5)**

- Provides \$100 million for critical senior nutrition programs like Meals on Wheels and meals served at senior centers, which has provided about 14 million more meals for seniors nationwide.
- Includes provisions to help older homeowners tap the equity in their homes with reverse mortgages to refinance unaffordable mortgages, pay medical bills, and meet other daily expenses.
- Provides \$5 billion to help more than one million modest-income households, including hundreds of thousands of seniors, weatherize their homes and reduce their heating bills by an average of 32 percent.

100% of House Republicans voted NO

##### **FY 2010 LABOR-HHS-EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS ACT (PL 111-117)**

- Provides funding for 2010 to boost senior nutrition programs, senior transportation programs, and other supportive services. This funding will help provide nearly 239 million meals to 2.5 million seniors in 2010, an increase of about 3 million meals over 2009.
- Provides sufficient funding for Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) for 2010 to ensure that approximately 7.5 million households, including millions of seniors, receive the home energy assistance that they need.
- Provides additional funding for federal and state inspections of nursing homes and other medical facilities, in order to improve the quality of care and give inspectors greater opportunities to identify infection control problems.

100% of House Republicans voted NO

#### **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

##### **STATUTORY PAY-AS-YOU-GO (PL 111-139)**

- Puts in federal statute a pay-as-you-go requirement, imposing tough fiscal discipline, requiring that new policies that increase mandatory spending or reduce revenues must be fully offset.
- Helped to create the record budget surpluses the nation enjoyed under President Clinton.

100% of House Republicans voted NO

##### **WEAPON SYSTEMS ACQUISITION REFORM ACT (PL 111-23)**

- Saves taxpayers money by cracking down on Pentagon waste and cost overruns, which an independent watchdog says amount to \$296 billion just for the 96 largest weapons systems.

##### **IMPROPER PAYMENTS ELIMINATION AND RECOVERY ACT (PL 111-204)**

- Saves taxpayers money by helping identify, reduce and eliminate improper payments by federal agencies, as well as recovering lost funds, on behalf of U.S. taxpayers, that federal agencies have spent improperly.



For more information please visit my website: <http://berkley.house.gov>  
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