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## Social Security still in danger despite Biden State of Union Success

By Robert Weiner

### With McCarthy's Uncertain with Freedom Caucus active, Cuts May Come in Guise of Budget "Reforms"

By Robert Weiner and Henry Deng

With his State of the Union presentation, President Biden **received** full House support on not cutting Social Security and Medicare as Republicans sparred with Biden when he claimed some Republicans wanted to cut it. However, just days after Biden's speech, it is shocking that Republicans like Montana Congressman Ryan Zinke still said they are **committed** to "review" funding for social security right after saying cutting social security is "off the table" during a CNN interview. Biden is right that Senator Republican Campaign Chair sought review after every five years; other Republicans sought annual re-votes.

Social Security and Medicare are still in danger. Biden's Successful High Wire SOTU Negotiations has not stopped statements and a back door budget. Moreover, ther cuts may comer under the Guise of "Reforms".

Back in January 2017, at the first Sean Spicer briefing for Donald Trump in the White House Briefing Room, we asked Spicer if, when Mitch McConnell presenterd a comprehensive budget that included Social Security cuts, Trump would sign the bill. Spicer responded No, that "Social Security will be protected."

Trump is still **telling** Republicans not to touch Social Security. However, with a pending budget proposed by Kevin McCarthy and House Republicans, it is no secret that many Republican members of Congress intend to cut Social Security and Medicare, while McCarthy is actively pushing budget cuts as he meets Biden and beyond.

Even if the former NRSC Chair Sen. Rick Scott (R-Florida) **denied** his previous platform to cut Social Security and Medicare during an interview with Chuck Todd after midterms, the fact that he continues his **support** on "sunsetting"

federal programs like social security every five years creates instability and is indeed, just like Biden said during his speech in Tampa, Florida, "outrageous."

As the midterms ended with Republicans gaining a razor-thin majority in the House, Republicans led by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy were [planning](#) to cut Social Security and Medicare with the excuse of making "hard decisions" as the nation hit the debt ceiling, Many Republicans, such as Georgia Congressman Rick Allen [supported](#) increasing the Social Security retirement age to 68.

If to "reform" Social Security means cutting benefits for existing Social Security recipients, then Republicans' push for reform is simply unfounded. The Social Security "insolvency" is actually a myth as there is a \$2.85 trillion [surplus](#) in Social Security trust fund reserves that could benefit recipients. As Social Security recipients will face another payment [increase](#) of 8.7%, Social Security has proven to be a successful program. By 2035, if the full surplus flattens somewhat, Congress can easily fix the taxable income figure, raising to \$250,000 from \$150,000 the income limit.

When Gene Sperling and Jason Furman [advised](#) President Obama to cut Social Security and Medicare to please Republicans and conservative Democrats, we asked in another White House briefing if they had factored in the additional poverty that cuts would cause. The next day, President Obama reversed course because the administration realized that cuts in Social Security could only mean going back to the old days of three times the poverty among seniors.

For example, Social Security is essential in the key seniors state of Florida, where those living in poverty, the elderly, and people with disabilities rely on the program. At least 4.8 million Floridians are actively [receiving](#) Social Security benefits.

For the elderly, Social Security needs to be funded, not "reformed." Of all Social Security recipients in [Florida](#), 75% are retired workers. Every county in Florida is projected to have its elderly population [increase](#) in the following years. In the state's most populous county, Miami-Dade, the population over 65 years old increased from 337K in 2007 to a projected 515K in 2026. At the same time, 20.8% of the elderly make poverty-level income, while 32.8% of the elderly have at least one form of disability.

Nationwide, the population over 65 is **projected** to almost double before 2060, and older adults are working longer into their lives. Social Security will be beneficial for any elderly who are retired or not, as funds for disability insurance are not projected to deplete anytime soon. Meanwhile, as the time that OASDI trust fund is **projected** to decrease in 2034 in 2021, which now the projection has even been extended by a year, there is more proof that Social Security needs to be funded rather than as a reason to defund.

For people in poverty, more evidence proves that Social Security is beneficial. The national poverty rate has been **cut** by almost half, from around 22% in 1959 to 11.6% in 2021. Social Security works for spouses, too, as U.S. household income has **increased** by at least 34.2% since 1967, and certain households faced a real income increase of 133%. Moreover, in June 2022, 76% of voters **said** they would rather pay more for Social Security than reduce its funding.

Kevin McCarthy **said** during his January 12th news conference the Republicans will "protect Social Security" while also promising to "scrutinize every dollar spent." If Social Security is working as it should, then why bother doing cuts under the guise of "reforms" that can possibly make people lose the benefits they deserve?

Congress should be aware that Social Security and Medicare are no longer secure. In a time of inflation and economic insecurity, Social Security has proven to be a program that will help people in need. As people face economic insecurity as inflation continues, Congress must get its act together and truly protect Social Security.

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