

# **Social Security, Medicare & Public Education Now on the U.S. Government Chopping Block**

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**June 11, 2011**

There are currently seventeen [8], bills pending in either the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate that are related to changes in Social Security [1-2]. This staggering number of Social Security bills, now being considered in various committees, where amendments will be added or the bills changed, shows how determined many elected officials are in either privatizing or killing two of the most beneficial programs to protect the public ever created (with the exception of the U.S. EPA and our Clear Air and Water Act Laws).

President Obama and members of the U.S. House and Senate have placed Social Security and Medicare on the chopping block in ongoing debt ceiling negotiations. In these secret negotiations, far away from public enlightenment or debate, deals are being cooked-up to undermine, cut or privatize these important and highly beneficial programs.

The income cap, for example, in Social Security should be increased so that the rich pay their fair tax share of these costs. Instead more payroll tax holidays are planned allowing the rich to escalate their riches by paying less in taxes. Wall Street wants to privatize Social Security because that would give them access to guaranteed sums of money (our payroll tax dollars), enriching their Wall Street coffers and those of private companies who would charge all of us more for this type of coverage to increase their profits.

Medicare and Medicaid on also on the chopping block because it would put our seniors, and others, at the mercy of private insurance companies who would make it too expensive for them to purchase health insurance, as is the case now. Privatization is the buzzword these days...as lobbyists work toward concerning this lucrative market and driving up costs for everyone. Many won't be able to find or pay for insurance due to job losses and other cost of living increases if most of these bills are passed.

Within the next month, in a rush of deals and bills, our elected officials will vote on these important issues without our knowledge, public debate or consent. They will vote before ink has dried on these deals, usually before the legislation is written behind closed doors, taking the American people to the "cleaners" one more time.

U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders from Vermont has been one of the few senators speaking out about these important issues. One of the best bills on Social Security which he introduced this year (U.S. Senate Bill 582: Social Security Protection Act of 2011), should be supported by the public. In addition to this bill we need to provide for the future solvency of social security by raising the income cap so that the very rich have to pay their share of the future costs for this program.

Our elected officials should amend Title II of the Social Security Act to preserve and protect Social Security benefits of American workers, and help ensure greater congressional oversight of the Social Security system, by requiring that both Houses of Congress approve any totalization agreements, with other countries, before giving foreign workers and their families Social Security benefits when they don't live in the United States and aren't U.S. citizens. (Current U.S. government policies don't require congressional approval [9].)

Instead of dealing with issues that would reduce the deficit over the long term our elected officials are intent on undermining basic middle class programs in education, health care, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, mental health care, and jobs. The proposed cuts in these areas are staggering in a time when unemployment is high, when wages are decreasing, and when prices for basics like food, health insurance, regressive sales taxes/fees, and fuels are increasing daily.

If we don't step up to the plate and protect these vital programs we all lose. Our elected officials can take steps to reduce our war costs and deficits without undermining the middle class or jeopardizing more jobs through unnecessary budget cuts. Instead our elected officials want to reduce the taxes on the wealthiest in the U.S. and continue to allow corporations to pay little or no taxes; in some cases the wealthiest corporations are getting huge subsidies and/or huge tax refunds.

We have choices to make in the near future. We can decide to have our voices heard on these critical issues or we can stand aside and let the corporations and their corporate lobbyists win. Our voices are powerful, our votes are important, and we do have a choice. You can read the proposed Social Security and Medicare bills online at either of the two links below. You can contact your elected officials at the links below [3-4].

If you parents and grandparents have their Social Security and Medicare (or Medicaid), reduced or cut can you afford to pay their medical, food, rent, and utility bills? Are your children earning enough to support you if those benefits are reduced or cut? Do you want to be at the mercy of having to find insurance from a private corporation where their only motive is profit? Do you want to rely on the stock market and futures betting as a replacement for the guarantees that you have now?

Can you now pay for your child's college education or must they now take out expensive loans (where they may be in debt for the rest of their lives), in order to attend college? Do you want your public schools privatized (charter schools are taking over public education at a great price), where the profit motive becomes the driving force rather than a free K-12<sup>th</sup> Grade Public Education for every child?

If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions remain silent. If the answer is "NO" then take action. We have powerful voices and we do have a choice to make today.

- 1, If you want to read current U.S. House or Senate Legislation on Social Security & Medicare visit this website: <http://www.govtrack.us/>

**Please note that the title of these Bills can be highly misleading and does not reflect the written content of the legislation.**

- 2, Another source of information or to read the complete bill texts on current U.S. House or Senate Legislation visit this website: <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php>

**More bills will be added to this list as they are introduced (See [1-2] above for full text of these bills, their current status and which committee, and committee members, will be conducting hearings on these bills).**

- 3, U.S. Senate Contact Information: [http://www.senate.gov/general/contact\\_information/senators\\_cfm.cfm](http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm)
- 4, U.S. House of Representatives Contact Information: <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>
- 5, For more information on Social Security & Medicare visit this Website: <http://www.ssa.gov/>

- 6, NewsWithViews Archive of Articles Written by Rosalind Peterson  
<http://newswithviews.com/Peterson/rosalindA.htm>
- 7, Please visit the following website for a complete listing of all Social Security Bills that were introduced in either the U.S. House or Senate between January 1, 2011, and June 1, 2011. This website also details and links to speeches given on this subject by our elected officials.  
<http://www.agriculturedefensecoalition.org/?q=social-security> (Petition Located Here)
- 8, **GovTrack.us Listing of Social Security Bills in U.S. House and Senate:**
- |    |   |                         |
|----|---|-------------------------|
| A. | H.R. 1052: Social Security Guarantee Act of 2011                                      | Introduced Mar 11, 2011 |
| B. | H.R. 1118: Social Security Protection Act of 2011                                     | Introduced Mar 16, 2011 |
| C. | Senate 582: Social Security Protection Act of 2011                                    | Introduced Mar 15, 2011 |
| D. | H.R. 219: Social Security Preservation Act of 2011                                    | Introduced Jan 7, 2011  |
| E. | Senate 123: Social Security Lock-Box Act of 2011                                      | Introduced Jan 25, 2011 |
| F. | H.R. 149: Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act -                             | Introduced Jan 5, 2011  |
| G. | H.R. 160: Social Security Fairness for the Terminally Ill Act of 2011 -               | Introduced Jan 5, 2011  |
| H. | H.R. 311: Social Security Number Fraudulent Use Notification Act of 2011 -            | Introduced Jan 18, 2011 |
| I. | H.R. 787: No Social Security for Illegal Immigrants Act of 2011 -                     | Introduced Feb 17, 2011 |
| J. | H.R. 1538: Social Security Identity Defense Act of 2011 -                             | Introduced Apr 14, 2011 |
| K. | S. 181: Social Security Totalization Agreement Reform Act of 2011 -                   | Introduced Jan 25, 2011 |
| L. | H.R. 1630: Social Security and Medicare Protection Act                                | Introduced Apr 15, 2011 |
| M. | H.R. 98: Illegal Immigration Enforcement and Social Security Protection Act of 2011 - | Introduced Jan 5, 2011  |
| N. | H.R. 1332: Social Security Fairness Act of 2011                                       | Introduced Apr 1, 2011  |
| O. | Senate 804: Social Security Solvency and Sustainability Act -                         | Introduced Apr 13, 2011 |
| P. | H.R. 797: No Loopholes in Social Security Taxes Act                                   | Introduced Feb 18, 2011 |
| Q. | H.R. 796: Social Security Protection and Truth in Budgeting Act of 2011               |                         |
- 9, U.S. Social Security Totalization Agreement Listing and general information:  
<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/international/status.html>  
 Legal citations refer to the United States Treaties and Other International Agreements Series (UST) and the Treaties and Other International Acts Series (TIAS), both published by the U.S. Department of State. In the case of agreements that have not yet been published in the UST or TIAS series...see this website for information.  
[http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OP\\_Home/handbook/handbook.01/handbook-0107.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/OP_Home/handbook/handbook.01/handbook-0107.html)  
[http://www.socialsecurity.gov/international/agreement\\_descriptions.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/international/agreement_descriptions.html)  
 There is currently a pending agreement that would add Mexico and/or other countries to our list of approved Totalization Agreements:  
<http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pressoffice/factsheets/USandMexico.htm>  
 International Totalization Agreement Information: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/international/>