

When you're talking about Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, be sure to remember ...

1. Social Security is the nation's largest, most successful social program. It provides vital support and dignity for millions of seniors, people with disabilities, and children who have lost a parent.
2. Social Security is stable! It will be there for you! It has never missed a payment since it started paying benefits in 1941.
3. Social Security is our money! We pay for it while we work through the payroll tax: 6.2% from employees, plus 6.2% from employers (self-employed pay the full 12.4%). The amount of income subject to the payroll tax is capped. It is now \$113,700.
4. Social Security's surplus is invested in Treasury Bonds, the safest investment possible. Interest on the Bonds supplements the Social Security Trust Fund.
5. The Trust Fund has a \$2.7 Trillion surplus, enough to pay full benefits until at least 2033. Payroll taxes alone could fund 86% of benefits after that. Small tweaks can bring it back to 100%.
6. Social Security could pay full benefits indefinitely if salaries above \$113,700 were taxed.
7. With disappearing pensions, the crash in housing values and losses in private pension investment schemes like 401ks, workers need Social Security more than ever!
8. The Chained CPI is a bad deal for seniors, veterans, people with disabilities and working families.
9. The average Social Security check is not much more than \$1100 per month. For 2/3 of seniors, Social Security is over half their income. For over 1/3 of retirees, Social Security provides more than ninety percent of their income
10. An average earner retiring at age 65 would lose over \$6,000 over 15 years if the chained CPI were adopted. Switching to a chained CPI would compound benefit reductions dramatically over time, resulting in an annual benefit that is roughly \$1,000 (2012 dollars) lower by age 85.
11. The chained CPI would cut the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). It assumes consumers will just substitute cheaper products when prices go up. But that doesn't work for seniors, who spend more on health care. These costs cannot simply be substituted with a cheaper version. You can't substitute triple bypass surgery with a double because it's cheaper.
12. We need a **higher** COLA to cover escalating health care costs faced by seniors.
13. Medicare and Medicaid have reduced poverty among the disabled and elderly by two-thirds since they were signed into law in July 1965.
14. Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid give INDEPENDENCE to millions of seniors, people with disabilities, working families and children as well as to the families that care for them.
15. What's killing us is the lack of jobs, not the debt! Austerity proposals to cut back social service programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid would only plunge us back into recession.