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Seniors Task Force Co-Chairs Oppose Ryan Republican Budget that Puts Seniors at Risk
Budget Ends Medicare, Slashes Medicaid, and Endangers Social Security

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, House Democratic Caucus Seniors Task Force co-chairs Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) voiced their opposition to the Ryan Republican budget for Fiscal Year 2013, which would be particularly devastating to seniors as it ends Medicare, slashes Medicaid, and puts Social Security at risk.



[WATCH](#) : Rep. Schakowsky and Rep. Matsui discuss the Ryan Republican budget plan

Like the Ryan budget proposed for Fiscal Year 2012, this year's Republican budget proposal ends the Medicare guarantee of specific benefits at an affordable price. Instead, seniors in Medicare would be handed a voucher, which they could use to buy a private insurance plan or traditional Medicare. However, the cost of the voucher would be capped, and each year, it would cover a smaller and smaller portion of the premium. Private insurers would be allowed to vary the benefits they provide, meaning they could, for example, offer gym memberships, but not the most effective diabetes drugs, thus encouraging healthier and younger seniors to join their plans and significantly driving up the costs for those who stay in traditional Medicare.

As AARP put it, "By creating a 'premium support' system for future Medicare beneficiaries, the proposal is likely to simply increase costs for beneficiaries while removing Medicare's promise of secure health coverage — a guarantee that future seniors have contributed to through a lifetime of hard work..." The plan also proposes raising the age of Medicare eligibility to 67.

Additionally, the plan caps and cuts federal Medicaid spending by \$810 billion over the next ten years, putting the burden on the states and ensuring that funds will not keep pace with need. This means that seniors would lose access to critical long term care services, upon which one in three seniors rely. It also means low-income children and people with disabilities would not be able to get the care they need.

The Republican budget will also force Congress to fast-track legislation determining the future of Social Security, and force benefits cuts on the program as a result. Two-thirds of retirees rely on Social Security for the majority of their income. It also makes significant cuts to the Older Americans Act, which means that things like senior housing, fuel assistance, training for older workers, and Meals on Wheels programs are all at risk.

"Under the Ryan plan, seniors would pay significantly more out-of-pocket for their health care," said Rep. Doris Matsui. "Between ending the Medicare guarantee, capping and cutting Medicaid dollars, and repealing the Affordable Care Act, which has already saved our seniors billions of dollars, the Republican budget completely disregards the needs of America's seniors — all while providing tax breaks for the wealthiest and Big Oil. While this is not surprising, it is still unacceptable, and Democrats will not stand for it."

"The Ryan Republican budget resolution would put an end to Medicare," said Rep. Jan

Schakowsky. “Though Republicans may still call their new scheme ‘Medicare’, it is very different from the Medicare we know and love. Private insurers would be allowed to vary the benefits they provide. Seniors’ out-of-pocket costs could double. Seniors would also lose access to critical long-term care services. We believe that it isn’t right to take away Social Security’s earned benefits, the Medicare guarantee or Medicaid long-term care services in order to give more tax breaks to the already wealthy.”

For more information on the Democratic Caucus Seniors Task Force, visit dems.gov/seniors .

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