



## Talking Points for Grassroots Activists

### 1. What is the goal of Social Security Works' grassroots activism?

- The goal of Social Security Works grassroots activism is to help engaged Americans to effectively meet with their House members and Senators, and to get our elected representatives to commit to vetoing all cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

### 2. What would Paul Ryan's plans for Medicare mean for current and future beneficiaries?

- Paul Ryan wants to replace Medicare's guaranteed benefit with a voucher system where seniors are given a fixed amount of money to purchase care from private insurers.
- Run out of money, you're out of luck. The poorest and sickest beneficiaries would be hardest hit.
- Part of the reason Medicare was created in the first place is that private health insurance companies don't want to cover people over 65, which is far less profitable for the corporations than covering younger Americans. Before Medicare, most seniors couldn't afford health insurance and those who had it paid an average of 3 times as much as younger people. Ryan wants to return us to those days.
- Despite covering groups with the most expensive healthcare needs—seniors and people with disabilities—Medicare is already far more cost-effective and efficient than private health insurance. So moving towards privatization is exactly the wrong direction. Instead, we should expand Medicare by lowering the eligibility age.
- Ryan claims current Medicare beneficiaries won't be impacted, but he is lying—there is no way to implement voucherization that wouldn't hurt current beneficiaries and make their costs go up.
- The American people vehemently oppose Ryan's plan
  - When polled, 70 percent of Americans say that Medicare should continue as it is today, rather than being changed to voucher system. That includes large majorities of Democratic, Republican, and Independent voters.

### 3. Where does President-elect Trump fit into this? Do you think he will support Ryan's Medicare plan?

- Donald Trump campaigned on a promise not to cut Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security.
- That means that Ryan's plan has no mandate—nobody voted to destroy Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

- Trump can't be trusted to keep his promise, and Tom Price, his nominee for Health and Human Services Secretary, is a close Ryan ally. But he should be held accountable and constantly reminded of his promise so that if he breaks his word, his voters will know it.
- Since Trump's record shows he can't be trusted to be the only firewall against benefit cuts, Social Security Works' grassroots activists are targeting House members and Senators.

**4. Social Security Works is also asking Senators and Representatives to pledge to vote against cuts to Medicare and Social Security. How are these three programs linked?**

- These three programs are very closely linked. In practice, shifting the cost of Medicare from the government to seniors amounts to a de facto cut to Social Security checks.
- Ryan and his allies plan to "block grant" Medicaid to the states which would mean giving each state a fixed amount of money to spend on Medicaid. That would not be enough to cover the program so states would either have to fill in the gap with their own money or cut benefits.
- Over 10 million Americans currently receive both Medicare and Medicaid. Medicaid is particularly essential for seniors near the end of their lives, and pays for the majority of the long term nursing home care in this country.
- While Social Security doesn't appear to be at the top of the GOP agenda at the moment we absolutely need to stay vigilant—Ryan supports privatizing the program, raising the retirement age, and cutting cost of living adjustments for current beneficiaries.

**5. What do you suggest people do if they want to support the goals of your grassroots activism? Where can they go to learn more?**

- People should call the Capitol switchboard at [202-224-3121](tel:202-224-3121) and ask to speak to their Senators. Ask them if they will pledge to veto all cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.
- Activists who have the time and resources to do so should consider arranging in-person meetings at the district offices of their House and Senate members. Social Security Works has created several guides and other resources to help activists plan and lead these meetings.