

Setting the Record Straight: Republican Agenda for Seniors

At the end of the day, Brendan Doherty wants Republicans in control of Congress and Mitt Romney setting the agenda in the White House. What would this mean for Rhode Island's seniors?

- 1) **No More Free Preventive Services for Seniors** – Doherty and Republicans in Congress support repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which, in 2011, allowed 128,390 Rhode Islanders with Medicare to receive free preventive services – such as mammograms and colonoscopies – or a free annual wellness visit with their doctor.¹
- 2) **Increasing Prescription Drug Costs for Seniors** – The Affordable Care Act also helps make Medicare prescription drug coverage more affordable for seniors by gradually closing the prescription drug coverage gap known as the “donut hole.” The donut hole occurs when their annual drug costs exceed a certain amount, at which point seniors have to pay drug costs out-of-pocket up to a yearly limit. After seniors reach that yearly out-of-pocket cost limit, the gap in prescription drug coverage ends and their health plan begins paying for prescriptions again. By 2020, the Affordable Care Act will close the “donut hole” altogether. Thanks to the ACA, seniors and people with disabilities in Rhode Island have already saved more than \$16 million in drug costs.²
- 3) **Weakening Medicare's Financial Condition** – The ACA extends the financial solvency of the Medicare Part A Trust Fund by eight years, in part by cutting waste, fighting fraud and abuse, and eliminating overpayments to insurance companies and providers.³
- 4) **Ending the Medicare Guarantee As We Know It** – The Republican Budget proposals, introduced in Congress by Representative Paul Ryan, would end the Medicare guarantee as we know it and replace it with a voucher system. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that the original Republican Budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2012 would have meant seniors starting on Medicare in 2022 would pay about \$6,000 more in out-of-pocket costs.⁴
- 5) **Democrats Have Stood Strong** – When debating the FY 2013 Republican Budget, Democrats on the Budget Committee offered an amendment to Paul Ryan's plan that expressed the House should reject any reform proposal that would partially or completely privatize Social Security. Every Republican in attendance voted against the amendment.⁵
- 6) **Problems with the Simpson-Bowles Plan** - The bottom-line is that the Simpson-Bowles plan cuts the already modest Social Security benefits that seniors have earned by increasing the retirement age and changing the calculation for Cost-of-Living-Adjustments, among other proposals.⁶ David Cicilline supports a plan that actually strengthens the solvency of Social Security without reducing benefits⁷ - the Preserving Our Promise to Seniors Act provides for a cost-of-living-adjustment that accounts for the rising costs our seniors face – prescription drugs, medical and housing expenses. And, it closes the 75-year funding gap, while improving benefits for current and future retirees, by gradually phasing out the cap on taxable wages.⁸

¹ [Website - U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; September 2012 Press Release - U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

² [Website - U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; August 2012 Press Release - U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

³ [May 2011 Press Release - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services; Website - U.S. Department of Health & Human Services; August 2010 Report - Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#)

⁴ [April 2011 - CBPP Report; August 2012 FAQ - Kaiser Health](#)

⁵ [March 2012 - Budget Committee Vote](#)

⁶ <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=3402>,
<http://strengthensocialsecurity.org/sites/default/files/Cuts from Raising Ret. Age to 69 updated 9 7 12.pdf>,

⁷ http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fteddeutch.house.gov%2Fuploadedfiles%2Fdeutch_preservingourpromise_legislative_summary.pdf&ei=V_pYUPzqJcTl0QH0iIE4&usg=AFQjCNFespNxrZpTPjJVeKF5Z0NXk3XrQ&cad=rja,
http://www.ssa.gov/oact/solvency/TDeutch_20101008.pdf

⁸ http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CB8QFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fteddeutch.house.gov%2Fuploadedfiles%2Fdeutch_preservingourpromise_legislative_summary.pdf&ei=V_pYUPzqJcTl0QH0iIE4&usg=AFQjCNFespNxrZpTPjJVeKF5Z0NXk3XrQ&cad=rja,
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