

America Speaks Rally: What to Say to the Press

Organizers: Please stick to the talking points below, and remember our goal is to provide information, protect and strengthen Social Security, and NOT to put anyone else down. It is important to stay on point, and it's better to say, "You should talk to Ashley at OWL" than to try to answer on your own. If press wants more info, please refer them to Ashley Carson, OWL at 202-329-3607.

Talking Points:

1. Older Women rely on Social Security for rent, food, medicine, and heat. The average benefit is under \$12,000, and we need every penny!
2. Social Security has a surplus of \$2.6 trillion - this is money left over after benefits are fully paid out. The government borrowed most of it, and owes it back to workers. But the program is not in the red.
3. Social Security did not cause the federal deficit and cutting benefits will not reduce the deficit, unless the government defaults on the loans it took from American workers.
4. Social Security is fully funded for nearly 30 years; thereafter it has sufficient funds to pay 75% of promised benefits. The 25% shortfall can easily be fixed over a long period of time. There is no crisis.
5. Social Security's retirement age, already scheduled to increase from 66 to 67, should not be raised further. That is a benefit cut that places a greatest hardship on older Americans who are in physically demanding jobs, like auto workers, teachers, nursing assistants, and plumbers, and people who are otherwise unable to find or keep employment due to the economy.
6. Older minority women are among those who most rely upon Social Security to stay out of poverty. Cutting benefits hurts those who need it most.
7. Social Security's average benefit in 2010 is \$13,800, and provides vital protections against the loss of wages as the result of disability, death, or old age. But it's not enough to buy a Lexus or a home in a gated community.
8. 6.5 million minor children receive Social Security benefits as dependents of deceased, disabled, or retired workers. It helps pay for housing, food, and education.
9. If seniors had to rely on only their income other than Social Security, nearly one in two would be poor.
10. Older Americans, disabled workers and their spouses, widows, and children rely heavily on Social Security today, and especially in the current economic crisis, it is the only income many families have.