



Candidate Packet

2018

Greetings!

Congratulations on your candidacy for the United States Congress. Social Security Works PAC is dedicated to supporting candidates who are committed to protecting and expanding Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid and lowering prescription drug prices. These are popular issues among voters of all demographics and party affiliations.

This packet will primarily serve as an educational tool to help you message these issues. Pages 3 and 4 provide polling which shows the electoral power of protecting and expanding Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and fighting to lower prescription drug prices. Pages 5 through 10 provide messaging for your stump speech and website. Page 10 also suggests language to use and to avoid. After reading the packet you should feel more prepared to speak to voters in your district about these policies. To make your message most powerful, it is always good to include personal stories, in addition to the facts and figures included in this packet.

Social Security Works PAC is excited by the possibility of working with you soon!

Best Regards,

Jon 'Bowzer' Bauman
President, Social Security Works PAC

VOTERS WANT CANDIDATES WHO WILL PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

In March 2018, after the Pennsylvania 18th District Special Election, End Citizens United, a group dedicated to campaign finance reform, polled voters about why they voted for newly-elected Conor Lamb. This campaign finance reform group was surprised by the result. **First & foremost, voters want candidates who will protect Social Security and Medicare.**

2018 CONOR LAMB (PA-18) VOTERS

From the following list of choices, which is the main reason you voted for Conor Lamb?

He refused corporate special interest money	18%
He's a Marine who will fight for veterans	5%
He'll protect workers' rights & stronger unions	13%
He said he will not vote for Nancy Pelosi for House Speaker	7%
He will defend Social Security and Medicare	43%
Something else	13%
Not sure	0%

Link to full polling: <http://endcitizensunited.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/PA18-Results.pdf>

See also [Conor Lamb's powerful political advertisement on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.](#)

IN FACT, VOTERS WANT CANDIDATES WHO WILL PROTECT AND EXPAND SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE!

Social Security Works completed its own polling in March 2018 asking voters specifically about candidates who support expanding Social Security, expanding Medicare, and lowering prescription drug prices. **Overwhelmingly voters are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports expanding Social Security, Medicare, and lowering prescription drug prices.**

March 2018, Public Policy Polling Social Security Works National Polling

Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for office if they **supported expanding and increasing Social Security benefits**, or would it not make a difference?



Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for office if they **supported expanding Medicare**, or would it not make a difference?



Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate for office if they **supported taking federal action to lower prescription drug prices**, or would it not make a difference?



Link to full results: <https://www.socialsecurityworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Nat-Social-Security-March-18-2-Results.pdf>

Social Security Messaging

- Social Security, along with Medicare, is the most successful domestic program in the history of the country.
 - Without Social Security, almost one out of two seniors would have incomes below the poverty line (around the same percentage as before Social Security was enacted.)
 - Social Security provides nearly 2/3 of seniors with most of their income, and 1/3 with virtually all of their income.
 - Social Security lifts over 22 million Americans – including over a million children – out of poverty and reduces the depth of poverty for millions more.
 - Social Security is extremely efficient: Of every dollar spent, more than 99 cents is paid in benefits; less than a penny goes to administration.
- Expanding Social Security is a solution to the following challenges:
 - We are facing a retirement income crisis, where too many Americans correctly fear that they will not be able to retire without a drastic decline in their standard of living, due to disappearing traditional pensions, stagnating wages, and loss of home equity.
 - We are facing rising levels of income and wealth inequality.
 - The economic squeeze on middle class families is causing the middle class to disappear.
- Whether to expand Social Security is a question of values, not affordability.
 - We are the wealthiest country in the world at the wealthiest moment in our history.
 - At its most expensive, at the end of this century, Social Security will cost just 6% of GDP – a much lower percentage than most other industrialized countries spend on their counterpart programs today. (It currently costs just under 5%.)
 - If the wealthiest among us are required to pay their fair share, not only can all promised benefits be paid throughout the 21st century and beyond, but we can afford to increase them.
- Republican politicians like my opponent have been trying to cut, privatize, and dismantle Social Security for decades. They want to return to a world where older Americans were forced to live with their adult children or literally go to the poorhouse, instead of retiring with dignity and independence.
- Don't be fooled when my opponent talks about "saving" Social Security. That is

Washington-speak for cutting, privatizing, dismantling Social Security brick by brick.

- For nearly a decade, Republicans have been cutting off funding to the Social Security Administration (SSA), leading to office closures and staff cuts at Social Security field offices around the country. With 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 every day, we should be fully funding SSA so they can open more offices instead of closing them.
- If elected, I will champion the expansion of Social Security, including the full funding of SSA. I will push for Congress to hold hearings on these various proposals and give us the opportunity to vote on them. It's time to make these common-sense policy ideas a reality.

IF CHALLENGED TO PROVIDE SPECIFICS OR ACCUSED OF BEING A “TAX-AND-SPEND” DEMOCRAT, YOU CAN RESPOND:

- In this Congress alone, a [number of bills](#) to expand Social Security, while ensuring that all benefits can be paid in full and on time, have been introduced. These include bills introduced by:
 - Representative [John Larson](#) (D-CT)
 - Ranking Member on the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security
 - Has 172 cosponsors on his bill
 - Senator [Bernie Sanders](#) (I-VT)
- Although the details of these various legislative proposals differ, they share common features. They all provide:
 - Across-the-board benefit increases
 - Switching to CPI-E, a more accurate cost of living adjustment, reflecting the higher health care and other costs of seniors and people with disabilities
 - Some targeted benefit increases to ensure that, after a lifetime of work, Americans do not retire into poverty.
 - Increased revenue to Social Security by requiring that millionaires and billionaires pay the same rate into Social Security as middle-class Americans do.
- None of these bills impose undue burdens on anyone. The Sanders bill does not impose a penny of additional costs on anyone making under \$250,000 a year. The Larson bill requires an average worker to pay only an additional 50 cents a week in exchange for increased benefits.

Suggested Social Security Website Text

Workers earn their Social Security benefits with every paycheck. I will work to protect and expand these vital benefits.

For decades, Republicans have tried to cut, undermine, and dismantle Social Security under the guise of “saving” it. In fact, Social Security doesn’t need saving. It is the most successful program in our nation’s history. If we simply require the wealthiest among us to contribute their fair share, we can easily afford to protect and expand benefits.

We don’t have a Social Security crisis, but we do have a retirement income crisis. The decline of traditional earned benefit pensions during the same decades that wages stagnated for working and middle-class Americans means that millions of workers face a reduced living standard when it’s time for them to retire – if they can retire at all. One out of every five senior citizens is trying to scrape by on an average income of just \$8,300 a year, and younger generations will have it even worse.

Now is the time to increase Social Security’s modest benefits, as a solution to both the looming retirement income crisis and rising income and wealth inequality.

Medicare Messaging

- Medicare, along with Social Security, is the most successful domestic program in the history of the country. It is the most efficient, secure, universal, and fair way for Americans to have guaranteed health care in retirement or when disabled.
- Before Medicare, very few seniors had any health insurance at all, and the health insurance that those very few had was generally inadequate.
- Medicare covers both seniors and people with disabilities, those with the highest medical costs. Yet, it is much more efficient than private sector healthcare plans.
 - Medicare spends [just 1.4 cents](#) of every dollar on administrative costs. The rest is paid in benefits.
 - In contrast, the [Affordable Care Act](#) had to limit insurance companies to using no more than 20% of patient premiums for administrative costs. There’s a big difference between 20% and 1.4%!
- Medicare should be improved for those on it and expanded.
 - Medicare should [cover](#) hearing, vision, and dental procedures.
 - Those eligible for Medicare should be expanded. Seniors can begin receiving Social Security at age 62 but cannot go on Medicare until age 65. Children should be covered as well.

IF YOU SUPPORT MEDICARE FOR ALL:

- Healthcare should be a right, not a privilege. Other industrialized countries provide universal coverage, spend less as a percentage of GDP, and produce better health outcomes.
- The creators of Medicare intended it to be a first step to Medicare for All.
 - They began with seniors and people with disabilities, those who on average have the highest health care costs.
 - Covering everyone else is less expensive.
- If the United States had the same per capita health care costs as any other industrialized country, the federal government would be [projecting surpluses](#).
- The United States' patchwork health care "system," is extremely wasteful. Americans can pay less out of pocket and less as a society, while covering everyone – if we improve Medicare and expand it to all.
- Momentum is growing for Medicare for All
 - The [Expanded & Improved Medicare for All Act](#), introduced in the House of Representatives, has 122 cosponsors.
 - Senator Bernie Sanders introduced the [Medicare for All Act](#) with cosponsors that included a who's who of those mentioned as potential presidential candidates in 2020.

Suggested Medicare Website Text

For those supporting expansion of Medicare:

Medicare, together with Social Security, is the nation's most successful domestic federal program. It must be improved for those currently on it and expanded so that those younger than age 65 can benefit from it sooner. By ensuring that Medicare provides vision, dental, and hearing coverage, we can correct an outrageous omission. By allowing those younger than 65, we can eliminate the age tax in health care premiums paid by older adults.

As the wealthiest nation in the world at the wealthiest moment in our history, we can afford to make health care a right for everyone. It is well past time to improve and expand Medicare

For those supporting Medicare for All:

Healthcare is a right, not a privilege. We should improve Medicare for those currently receiving it and expand it to everyone. Instead of subsidizing the insurance and pharmaceutical industries, our first priority should be ensuring all Americans can access the health care they need.

In 1965 and 1972, we took the first steps toward Medicare for All by providing guaranteed health insurance to seniors and people with disabilities – people who, on average, have the greatest need for health care and incur the highest cost. It is now time to finish the job and cover everyone.

If we do, we will pay less, have better coverage and have better health care outcomes. The time to act is now.

Prescription Drugs Messaging

- Drug prices are too high in the United States. They are too high in absolute terms and in comparative terms. We have the highest drug prices in the world.
- Congress prohibits Medicare from negotiating for lower drug costs.
- Nearly every new drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from 2010-2016 was associated with published research that was contributed to by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Consequently, Americans essentially pay twice for our medication.
- Big Pharma has higher profits than any other industry. Too many drug companies put profits over people.
 - Some of these corporations have hedge fund managers with no medical background making decisions about what to research and what price to charge.
 - In 2015, a drug company bought a medicine that sold for \$13.50 and raised the price to \$750 overnight.
 - Two recently-approved cancer-fighting drugs, developed from research and support of the federal government, cost \$475,000 and \$373,000 each.
- By curbing excess profits and monopolies, we will benefit from the vast taxpayer investment we already make in drug development and provide medicines to anyone who needs them. A life-saving medicine doesn't work if people can't afford it.
- If elected, my allegiance will be to my constituents, not Big Pharma and other special interests. I will start by allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.
- If elected, I also will ensure that there is competitive licensing, so patients will have choice about purchasing lower cost generics.

Suggested Prescription Drugs Website Text

Health care is a right, not a privilege. Being healthy includes the ability to afford safe and affordable prescription drugs, when our doctors prescribe them. It is time to enact prescription drug policies that lower the price.

It is outrageous that our tax dollars pay for much of the research for prescription drugs and then we are charged the highest prices in the world. It is unconscionable that anyone in the wealthiest country in the world has to choose between buying food and paying for prescription drugs. That is wrong.

It is time that we lower prescription drug prices. Our policies should work for all of us, not just for the CEOs and shareholders of the pharmaceutical industry.

Social Security & Medicare Winning Words

Instead of saying...	Say...
Entitlements	Earned benefits
Fix	Protect and Expand
Safety net	Foundation, cornerstone

Prescription Drug Price Winning Words

Instead of saying...	Say...
Prescription Drugs	Lifesaving prescription drugs
Patent Protection	Monopoly
Charge extremely high prices	Price gouge
Let the market for drugs operate like a true free and fair market	Life and health should not be for sale