

If you need assistance with your Social Security or Medicare benefits, please [contact](#) our office.

Congressman Rooney believes that Social Security and Medicare are critical programs for America's seniors. He is working to protect benefits for retirees while saving these important programs for future generations.

Congressman Rooney has made clear that he will not support any changes to these programs that would affect current retirees or near-retirees (Americans aged 55 and older). He firmly believes Congress has an obligation to uphold their contracts with America's seniors.

As your Representative, Rooney recognizes that Congress needs to act to ensure that our children's and grandchildren's Social Security and Medicare benefits will be there in the future.

There is a significant gap between what the government promises to pay in benefits and what it expects to collect in Social Security taxes. By 2017, the Social Security trust funds are expected to start paying more benefits annually than the system will collect in payroll and income taxes. As demographics change and costs increase, the challenge is to ensure that the Social Security system is strengthened for tomorrow's retirees, without changing benefits to our nation's current recipients or near retirees.

As a result of the economic downturn, and the formula used to calculate the cost of living adjustment (COLA) that ties it to inflation, seniors did not receive a COLA for 2010 or 2011. Since 1975, seniors have seen this automatic increase in their Social Security checks each month, and many seniors have struggled without this added supplement to their income. Recently, the U.S. Social Security Administration announced that seniors will see a COLA increase of 3.6 percent in Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits for 2012. To give seniors more certainty about their Social Security checks, and to ensure that adjustments to Social Security payments reflect changes in the costs of goods and services that seniors purchase, Congressman Rooney cosponsored the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act, H.R. 798.

Like Social Security, Medicare is facing long-term financial uncertainty. A recent Medicare Trustees report projects that the Medicare trust fund will run out of money by 2024 – five years earlier than they predicted just last year. Congressman Rooney believes that if Congress fails to act, Medicare may not exist for the next generation of Americans.

Congressman Rooney supported “The Path to Prosperity,” the budget proposal written by House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan and passed by the House. Experts across the ideological spectrum agree that the open-ended, fee-for-service structure of Medicare is a key driver of health care cost inflation. Medicare is not the train car being dragged along by the engine of rising costs; Medicare is the engine.

Ryan’s proposal would reverse this trend. Instead of allowing Medicare to continue driving health care cost inflation higher and higher, it would institute reforms to get costs under control through competition and transparency. The Ryan budget would create a premium support system similar to Medicare Advantage, which millions of seniors already have and like. Medicare would post a list of plans that would compete against each other for your business, you would pick the plan that works best for you, and Medicare would subsidize that plan. Every plan would be required to accept any senior that chooses it. The competitive market would force companies to offer high quality coverage at affordable prices, as seniors would have the power to deny business to inefficient providers.

The Ryan budget asks the wealthy to pay more to preserve Medicare for future generations. Wealthy people would get smaller subsidies, middle-income and sicker people would get more, and low-income people would get total coverage.

This proposal would not affect current Medicare beneficiaries or anyone 55 and older in any way. Instead, it offers future generations a strengthened Medicare program they can count on.

The President’s latest Medicare proposal, on the other hand, would control prices through an advisory board with the power to decide which services Medicare would cover and how much it would pay doctors. Congressman Rooney believes that letting an unaccountable board determine the services Medicare will cover, without giving seniors alternatives like the Ryan plan does, would take health care decisions out of the hands of patients and doctors. Setting strict price controls increases the risk that some doctors will stop seeing seniors on Medicare altogether. Already, 13 percent of doctors do not see Medicare patients. Another 17 percent limit the number of Medicare patients they accept. Washington cost controls could drive those

numbers even higher, leaving seniors unable to see a doctor.

The Ryan budget, on the other hand, repeals the President's cost-hiking health care law and replaces it with proven market forces to bring down costs. It builds on the successful Medicare prescription drug program, which came in at 41 percent below projected costs precisely because it forced private companies to compete for seniors' business.