

Be Prepared!

Questions to Ask Your Member of Congress at Your Next Town Hall

Members of Congress frequently schedule town halls during August, and that gives voters an opportunity to voice their opinions. Our lawmakers must face the people who put them in office—and can take them out. We encourage you to attend a town hall, and invite others you know. When attending, be prepared to ask questions about issues that concern you. Here are few idea starters:

1 The Social Security Trustees recently reported that Social Security costs are now exceeding the cash revenues coming into the program, and this will continue until the Trust Funds are exhausted. They estimated that there would be a \$46 billion cash deficit in 2011 alone. ***Do you think changes are needed, and what would you support doing to ensure that the government will be able to pay benefits?***

2 Which of the following statements do you most agree with: The COLA “overpays” Social Security recipients—or, the COLA is about right—or, the COLA grows too slowly, and retirees risk a loss in the buying power of their benefits over a retirement. ***What do you think should be done to provide a fair and adequate COLA for Social Security?***

3 In 1977, Congress enacted changes to the Social Security benefit formula that affected seniors born in 1917 and thereafter. The first seniors affected were only two years from age 62 and entitlement to Social Security, and a phase-in transitional benefit formula failed to provide protection from abrupt benefit cuts. The group known as “Notch Babies” turn ages 85 to 94, this year, receive lower Social Security benefits than other retirees with similar work and earnings histories. The four million seniors who are still living are now at the age when many senior Americans have exhausted their savings. ***Do you support Notch Reform that would provide a choice of \$5,000 or an improved monthly benefit?***

4 If the status of an illegal immigrant changes and, at some point, he or she receives work authorization, under current law that individual can file a claim for Social Security benefits if all other qualifications are met. Currently, Social Security counts all earnings toward Social Security entitlement, even for jobs worked while illegal and even if fraudulent or fake Social Security numbers were used. ***Do you think any change is needed to this policy and if so what do you propose?***

5 Medicare recipients spend a much larger portion of their income on healthcare than most younger people. About one in four Medicare beneficiaries spend more than 30 percent of their income on health care expenditures, with premiums accounting for the largest share of spending. Over the past decade Medicare Part B premiums alone rose 154%. ***What proposals do you support to restrain the growth in out-of-pocket Medicare costs for beneficiaries and how would you keep the program affordable for seniors and the disabled in the future?***



What You Can Do

Write letters to your U.S. Senators and your Representative to find out where he or she stands on these issues. For quick email access visit: www.seniorsleague.org.

The Senior Citizens League is an organization of active seniors concerned about the protection of their earned Social Security, Medicare, military, and other retirement benefits. TSCL members participate in a number of grassroots lobbying and public education campaigns to help ensure governmental bodies live up to their commitments. Readers wishing to contact TSCL should address correspondence to The Senior Citizens League, 1001 N. Fairfax St., Suite 101, Alexandria, VA 22314, or call 1-800-333-8725.