

## The University of Virginia Center for Politics



### Social Security: What is it? Should we save it?

#### Purpose:

This lesson introduces students to the history of one of the most popular programs in public policy, Social Security. Students then analyze the effects of this program on the American economy and analyze proposals being made to protect the Social Security program. Written in partnership with Public Agenda and the American Bar Association, this lesson plan compliments the ABA's Intergenerational debate ([www.abanet.org](http://www.abanet.org)). This lesson can be used to prepare students for viewing the debate podcasts or as a stand-alone lesson on current public policy.

#### Objectives:

1. Students will read a short history of the Social Security program in order to determine the role and function of the government in providing for its citizens.
2. Students will analyze economic data regarding Social Security in order to describe the economic impact of not reforming the Social Security trust fund.
3. Students will research proposals for Social Security reform in order to identify policies that might protect citizens and provide for a brighter economic future.

#### Key Terms:

*Entitlement Program*      *FICA*      *New Deal*      *Opportunity Cost*  
*Payroll Tax*              *Social Security*

**Supplemental Website:** [www.publicagenda.org](http://www.publicagenda.org) and [www.facingup.org](http://www.facingup.org)

#### Materials:

1. Teacher transparency, *How to Read a Pay Stub*
2. Student resource, *Social Security KWL*
3. Teacher transparency, *I hope he can take care of me....*
4. Teacher transparency, *The Great Depression*
5. Student Resource, *A Brief History of Social Security*
6. Teacher transparency, *Statistics Regarding the Future of Social Security*
7. Student Resource, *Advocating for Social Security Reform*
8. Student handout, *Save Social Security*

#### Procedure:

1. **Warm Up: What's in Your Paycheck?**
  - a. Prior to class if you have students who work, ask them to bring in their paycheck stub; if you don't ask them if a brother or sister works and might have a stub they can look at.
  - b. Project teacher transparency, *How to Read a Pay Stub*.
  - c. Discuss the questions on the bottom of the transparency:

- How much money did Kent Work earn during this pay period? \$1,000
  - How much was deposited into his account after taxes, deductions, etc? \$616.15
  - What percentage of his pay went towards Social Security? Medicare? Social Security: \$62 Medicare: \$14.50 Thirteen percent of his pay went to Social Security, Medicare and health care.
2. **What is Social Security?**
- a. Ask students to brainstorm what they already know about Social Security. Distribute the student resource, *Social Security-KWL*.
  - b. Direct the students to work in groups to identify what they already know about social security. Review responses as a class.
3. **Interpreting a Political Cartoon** - Display the teacher transparency, *I hope he can take care of me...* Ask students to describe what is going on in the cartoon.
- a. Describe what is taking place in the cartoon- *A father and his recent college graduate son are having breakfast and reading the paper. Both are concerned that they won't have the other to take care of them in old age.*
  - b. Why is the older man worried? *He is worried because Social Security funds are low and he doesn't know if the younger generation, symbolized by his son, will be there to meet his needs in retirement.*  
Why is the younger man worried? *He is worried because after graduating from college there are very few jobs.*
  - c. What is the artist implying about Social Security? *He is saying that the funds are running low and there is high unemployment. The son not having a job will lead to the funds in the Social Security fund getting lower- it's a vicious cycle. The son will have to have his father take care of him instead of the other way around.*
4. **Analyzing American Art** - Introduce the history of the Social Security program by placing the teacher transparency, *The Great Depression*. Discuss the 1934 Alice Neel painting:
- What is the mood created by the artist?
  - Based on the title what do you think is going on in the painting?
  - How might this painting relate to the current economic crisis?
  - What do you think the government should do to support people in old age or time of crisis? Why?
5. **The History of Social Security**
- a. Hand out the student resources, *A Brief History of Social Security* (long and short versions). Students should highlight the key components of the program and how it evolved throughout the end of the twentieth century.
  - b. Following reading the articles they should complete the Social Security timeline activity to make sure that they comprehend the evolution of the program.
6. **The Future of Social Security** - Display the PowerPoint slides or teacher transparency, *Statistics Regarding the Future of Social Security*. Discuss.

7. **Facing Up to Social Security** – In this activity, students explore the options for reforming Social Security.
  - a. Direct students to the Facing Up website, [www.facingup.org](http://www.facingup.org). Have them click the *Discussion* tab in the center of the page and then select Social Security from the topics listed.
  - b. Give the students some time to read the pros/cons of the suggested reforms and then allow them to select an option that each would like to advocate for.
  - c. Allow the students to regroup so that they are sitting with those who would advocate the same approach.
  - d. Distribute the student resource, *Advocating for Social Security Reform*. This resource is a qualitative checklist for creating an advocacy display on Social Security reform. Students should follow the Social Security issue in newspapers and the media to broaden their arguments for reform.

**Hint:** It might be good to invite other classes in to view the displays and allow the students time to teach their peers about social security reform. This would be a great preparation for voting in the Mock Election.

8. **Making Connections: Save Social Security Simulation** – Students role play members of the Social Security Task Force who will analyze possible solutions, and devise a multi-faceted plan to save Social Security.
  - a. Pass out the student handout, *Save Social Security*, and go over the directions for the simulations with students. Ask students to arrange their chairs in a circle so that everyone can be clearly seen and heard.
  - b. Students should draw a role out of a hat, or the teacher could assign roles. Students are instructed to play the role as realistically as possible given its description.
  - c. Each student should write a *Personal Action Plan* that lists several possible solutions to the Social Security Crisis. The student's PAP should be true to the role he/she has been given.
  - d. Next, the Social Security Task Force (SSTF) co-chairs lead a brainstorming session and record ALL possible solutions for saving Social Security on the board or poster board.
  - e. Then the SSTF begins the process of eliminating some solutions, and formulating a written action plan. The co-chairs will then present this plan to the President and Congress (i.e. the teacher and class).
  - f. At the end of the simulation, the teacher asks students to step back from their role, and to reflect on their experiences in the role play by discussing or writing answers to the debriefing questions.
9. **Wrap Up** - To wrap up the discussion of Social Security, have the students write to members of the Ways and Means committee or their state representatives in Congress to advocate for a particular reform. Use the YLI SpeakOut! Page to find addresses and contact information. You might also download the YLI lesson plan, *Writing to Elected Officials*, for formatting and content suggestions.

### How to Read A Pay Stub

Business Name		Check No:		A00001					
Business Address		Check Date:		02/07/xx					
		Period Ending:		02/01/xx					
<b>Kent Work</b>			<b>TAX ADJUSTMENTS</b>						
123 Job Lane		Salary:	26,000.00	FED:	ST:				
Greenville, NC 27838		SSN:	123-45-6789	LOCAL:					
<b>HOURS AND EARNINGS</b>		<b>TAXES AND DEDUCTIONS</b>		<b>OTHER</b>					
Description	Current Hours	Current Earnings	YTD Hours	YTD Earnings	Description	Current Amount	YTD Amount	Vac Balance	18.00
Regular	80.00	1000.00	240.00	3000.00				Sick Balance	23.00
								Retire Match	150.00
					<b>PRE-TAX</b>				
					Retirement	100.00	300.00		
					Health Ins	45.00	135.00		
					FSA	20.00	60.00		
					<b>AFTER-TAX</b>				
					Social Sec.	62.00	186.00		
					Medicare	14.50	43.50		
					Fed	95.60	286.80		
					State	41.75	125.25		
					Life	5.00	15.00		
	<b>GROSS</b>	<b>OTHER</b>	<b>TAXABLE</b>	<b>LESS TAXES</b>	<b>LESS DEDUCTIONS</b>	<b>NET PAY</b>			
Current	1000.00		835.00	213.85	170.00	616.15			
YTD	3000.00		2505.00	641.55	510.00	1848.45			

Figure 5-1: Sample Pay Stub

- How much money did Kent Work earn during this pay period?
- How much was deposited into his account after taxes, deductions, etc.
- What percentage of his pay went towards Social Security? Medicare?

Does this surprise you? Why or why not?

Business Name		Check No:		A00001					
Business Address		Check Date:		02/07/02					
		Period Ending:		02/01/02					
Kent Work 123 Job Lane Greenville, NC 27858			Salary: 26,000.00 SSN: 123-45-6789						
			TAX ADJUSTMENTS FED: ST: LOCAL:						
HOURS AND EARNINGS		TAXES AND DEDUCTIONS		OTHER					
Description	Current Hours	Current Earnings	YTD Hours	YTD Earnings	Description	Current Amount	YTD Amount	Vac. Balance	18.00
Regular	80.00	1000.00	240.00	3000.00				Sick Balance	23.00
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Current	1000.00		835.00	213.85	170.00	616.15			
YTD	3000.00		2505.00	641.55	510.00	1848.45			

Figure 5-1: Sample Pay Stub

**Question:** Why are there both pre-tax and after-tax deductions?

**Answer:** Because the pre-tax deductions are *voluntary* and the after-tax deductions are *mandatory*.

**What are mandatory deductions?**

Mandatory deductions are required by law. This can mean a deduction is required by federal law, like Social Security and Medicare and the “Fed” deduction, or by state law, like the “State” deduction. Social Security and Medicare are part of the “FICA tax.” FICA is the Federal Insurance Contributions Act. The “Fed” and “State” deductions are called income taxes.

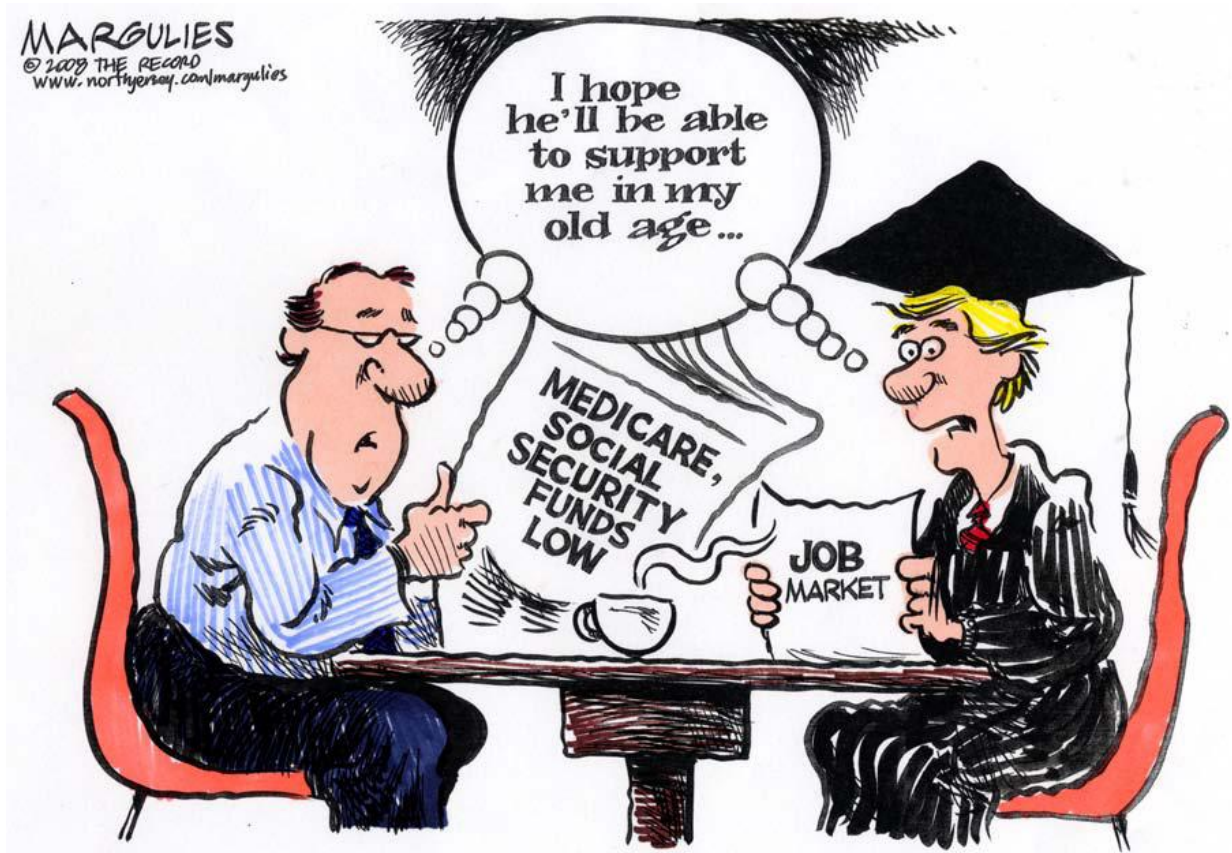
**What are voluntary deductions?**

Voluntary deductions are optional deductions agreed upon by the employee. These are used to pay for various employee benefits. These include retirement, health insurance, and FSA, as seen on the pay stub. FSA deductions go into a Flexible Spending Account, set up by the employer, which provides money for medical or other expenses. As they are not subject to payroll taxes, they provide more money for expenses. There are all types of other voluntary deductions, such as parking, stock options, meals and uniforms. Life insurance is also a voluntary deduction, even though it is in the “after-tax” category.

**Social Security- KWL**

What I already <b>know</b> about Social Security reforms	What I <b>want to know</b> about Social Security reforms	What I have <b>learned</b> about Social Security reform

## I Hope He Can Take Care of Me.....



Permission: [www.caglecartoons.com](http://www.caglecartoons.com)

- Describe what is taking place in the cartoon
- Why is the older man worried? Why is the younger man worried?
- What is the artist implying about Social Security?

## The Great Depression



Alice Neel, 1934 **Investigation of Property at the Russell Sage Foundation**

- During the Great Depression many people, particularly the elderly, lost their property.
- Unemployment was at approximately 25%.
- In your opinion, what should the government do to help people during difficult times?

# Social Security: A Brief History

[www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov)

For more information about the history of Social Security, see our Internet site at <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/history>

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY**

### **A FOUNDATION OF ECONOMIC SECURITY**

For most of human history, people lived and worked on farms in extended families and this was the foundation of their economic security. However, this changed as the developed world underwent the Industrial Revolution. The extended family and the family farm as sources of economic security became less common as more and more people became wage-earners, working for others. Along with the shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy, Americans moved from farms and small rural communities to larger cities. In 1890, only 28 percent of the U.S. population lived in cities, by 1930 this percentage had exactly doubled, to 56 percent. In Europe in the late 19th century the idea developed for Social Security as one form of economic security in a modern industrialized world. The world's first Social Security retirement program was put into effect in Germany in 1889, designed by Germany's legendary Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. In the United States, the Great Depression of the 1930s triggered a crisis in the nation's economic life. It was against this backdrop that the Social Security Act emerged.

### **THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT**

On June 8, 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a message to the Congress, announced his intention to provide a program for Social Security. Subsequently, the President created by Executive Order the Committee on Economic Security, which was composed of Frances Perkins, Secretary of Labor, Chairwoman; Henry Morgenthau, Jr., Secretary of the Treasury; Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture; Homer S. Cummings, Attorney General; and Harry L. Hopkins, Federal Emergency Relief Administrator. The committee was instructed to study the entire problem of economic security and to make recommendations that would serve as the basis for legislative consideration by the Congress. In early January 1935, the Committee made its report to the President, and on January 17 the President introduced the report to both Houses of Congress for simultaneous consideration. Each House passed its own version, but eventually the differences were resolved and the Social Security Act was signed into law on August 14, 1935. In addition to several provisions for the general welfare, the new Act created a social insurance program designed to pay retired workers age 65 or older continuing income.

### **IMPLEMENTING THE ACT**

One provision of the Act established a bipartisan Social Security Board (SSB) composed of three members appointed by the President. The original members were John G. Winant, Chairman; Arthur J. Altmeyer; and Vincent M. Miles. (Eventually, SSB would be replaced by the current Social Security Administration, headed by a single Commissioner rather than a board.) In 1935, SSB was faced with the task of providing employers, employees and the public with information on how earnings were to be reported, what benefits were available and how they were to be provided. In addition, sites for field installations had to be chosen and personnel to staff these offices had to be selected and trained. The monumental first job was the need to register employers and workers by January 1, 1937, when workers would begin acquiring credits toward old-age insurance benefits and payroll taxes would start to be collected. Since SSB did not have the resources available to accomplish this, they contracted with the U.S. Post Office to distribute the applications, beginning in November 1936. The post offices collected the completed forms, typed the Social Security number cards, and returned the cards to the applicants. The applications then were forwarded to Sib's processing center located in Baltimore, Md., where the numbers were registered and various employment records established. Over 35 million Social Security cards were issued through this procedure in 1936-37.

## FIRST PAYMENTS

Under the 1935 law, monthly benefits were to start in 1942. From 1937 until 1942, Social Security was to pay benefits to retirees in the form of a single, lump-sum refund payment. The earliest reported applicant for a lump-sum refund was a retired Cleveland motorman named Ernest Ackerman, who retired one day after the Social Security program began. During his one day of participation in the program, a nickel was withheld from Mr. Ackerman's pay for Social Security, and, upon retiring, he received a lumpsum payment of 17 cents. The average lump-sum payment during this period was \$58.06. The smallest payment ever made was for 5 cents.

## 1939 AMENDMENTS

The original Act provided only retirement benefits, and only to the worker. The 1939 Amendments made a fundamental change in the Social Security program. The Amendments added two new categories of benefits: payments to the spouse and minor children of a retired worker (called dependents benefits) and survivors benefits paid to the family in the event of the premature death of the worker. The 1939 Amendments also increased benefit amounts and accelerated the start of monthly benefit payments from 1942 to 1940.

## MONTHLY BENEFITS

Payment of monthly benefits began in January 1940. On January 31, 1940, the first monthly retirement check was issued to a retired legal secretary, Ida May Fuller, of Ludlow, Vt., in the amount of \$22.54. Miss Fuller died in January 1975 at the age of 100. During her 35 years as a beneficiary, she received over \$22,000 in benefits.

## 1950 AMENDMENTS

From 1940 until 1950, virtually no changes were made in the Social Security program. Because the program was still in its infancy, Social Security's retirement benefits were very low. In fact, until 1951, the average welfare benefit received under the old age assistance provisions of the Act was higher than the average retirement benefit received under Social Security. Only about 50 percent of America's workers were covered under the program at that time. In 1950 major amendments were enacted. These amendments raised benefits for the first time and placed the program on the road to the virtually universal coverage it has today.

## THE STORY OF COLAS

Most people are aware that there are annual increases in Social Security benefits to offset the effects of inflation on fixed incomes. These increases, known as cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs), are such an accepted feature of the program that it is difficult to imagine Social Security without them. But, in fact, when Ida May Fuller received her first \$22.54 benefit payment in January of 1940, this was the amount she could expect to receive for life. It was not until the 1950 Amendments that Congress legislated the first COLA — 77 percent increase. From that point on, benefits were increased only when Congress enacted special legislation. In 1972, the law was changed to provide, beginning in 1975, for automatic annual COLAs based on the annual increase in consumer prices. No longer do beneficiaries have to await a special act of Congress to receive a benefit increase and no longer does inflation drain value from Social Security benefits.

Social Security COLA's 1950-2005			
Effective Date	Percent Increase	Effective Date	Percent Increase
9/51	77.0	12/85	3.1
9/52	12.5	12/86	1.3
9/54	13.0	12/87	4.2
1/59	7.0	12/88	4.0
1/65	7.0	12/89	4.7

2/68	13.0	12/90	5.4
1/70	15.0	12/91	3.7
1/71	10.0	12/92	3.0
9/72	20.0	12/93	2.6
3/74	7.0	12/94	2.8
6/74	11.0	12/95	2.6
6/75	8.0	12/96	2.9
6/76	6.4	12/97	2.1
6/77	5.9	12/98	1.3
6/78	6.5	12/99	2.5
6/79	9.9	12/00	3.5
6/80	14.3	12/01	2.6
6/81	11.2	12/02	1.4
6/82	7.4	12/03	2.1
12/83	3.5	12/04	2.7
12/84	3.5		

*Notes:* The increase in 3/74 was a special, limited-duration increase; it was effective for only 3/74-5/74. In June 1974 all payment levels reverted to their 2/74 level and the 11 percent increase was permanently applied on this base. The COLA for December 1999 was originally determined as 2.4 percent; however, it was subsequently raised to 2.5 percent. Initially, the automatic COLAs were effective in June each year (and received in the July payment) but a 1983 change in the law shifted the effective date to December (for payments received in January).

## **DISABILITY BENEFITS**

The Social Security Amendments of 1954 initiated a disability insurance program that provided the public with additional coverage against economic insecurity. At first, there was a disability “freeze” of workers’ Social Security records during years when they were unable to work. While this measure offered no cash benefits, it did prevent such periods of disability from reducing or wiping out retirement and survivor benefits. On August 1, 1956, the Social Security Act was amended to provide cash benefits to disabled workers aged 50-65 and disabled adult children. Over the next few years, Congress broadened the scope of the program, permitting the dependents of disabled workers to qualify for benefits, and eventually disabled workers at any age could qualify.

## **MEDICARE & OTHER CHANGES**

The decade of the 1960s brought additional changes to the Social Security program. Among the most significant was a provision in the Amendments of 1961 lowering the age at which men are first eligible for retirement benefits to 62 (women previously were given this option in 1956). The most significant change involved the passage of Medicare. Under Medicare, health coverage was extended to Social Security beneficiaries aged 65 or older (and eventually to those receiving disability benefits as well). Nearly 20 million beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare in the first three years of the program. Social Security would continue to have responsibility for the Medicare program until a 1977 reorganization created the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA). HCFA assumed administrative responsibility for Medicare at that time. (In 2001, HCFA was renamed the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.)

## **THE DECADE OF THE 1970s**

In addition to the automatic annual COLA provision, the 1972 law also introduced wage-indexing of the initial benefit amount upon retirement, in order to ensure that Social Security benefits keep up with standards of living. These two changes, taken together, introduced the principle of automatic adjustments in

Social Security benefits to compensate for both wage and price inflation in the economy. The 1970s also saw stress on program financing as the adverse economic conditions of that era combined with a maturing program to produce the first period of sustained fiscal imbalance in the system. Amendments enacted in 1977 sought to restore financial balance to the system. The current tax-rate schedule for Social Security was set in these amendments in 1977 (the schedule was slightly modified in 1983).

## **Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Program**

In addition to the financing changes introduced in the legislation of 1972 and 1977, the 1970s also saw the creation of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. In the original 1935 Social Security Act, programs were introduced for needy aged and blind individuals and, in 1950, needy disabled individuals were added. These three programs were known as the “adult categories” of welfare and were administered by state and local governments with partial federal funding. Over the years, the state programs became more complex and inconsistent, with as many as 1,350 administrative agencies involved and payments varying more than 300 percent from state to state. In 1969, President Nixon identified a need to reform these and related welfare programs to “bring reason, order, and purpose into a tangle of overlapping programs.” In 1971, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Elliot Richardson proposed that Social Security assume responsibility for the adult categories. In the Social Security Amendments of 1972, Congress federalized the adult categories by creating the SSI program and assigned responsibility for it to Social Security. SSI is a needs-based program for elderly, blind and disabled individuals.

## **THE DECADE OF THE 1980s**

The Social Security Amendments of 1980 made changes in the disability program. Most of these changes focused on various work incentive provisions for both Social Security and SSI disability benefits. The 1980 Amendments also required Social Security to conduct periodic reviews of current disability beneficiaries to certify their continuing eligibility. This became a massive, controversial workload. By 1983, the reviews had been halted, and, in 1984, Congress passed the Disability Benefits Reform Act modifying several aspects of the disability program, including how disability reviews are conducted. In the early 1980s, the Social Security program faced a serious short-term financing crisis. President Ronald Reagan appointed a blue-ribbon panel, known as the Greenspan Commission, to study the financing issues and make recommendations for legislative changes. The final bill, signed into law in April 1983, made numerous changes in the Social Security program, including the partial taxation of Social Security benefits; the first coverage of federal employees; rising the retirement age gradually starting in 2000; and increasing the reserves in the Social Security trust funds.

In 1989, as part of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, President George Bush signed into law the requirement that Social Security send annual *Social Security Statements* to almost all persons working under Social Security. These *Statements* are an important financial planning tool available from Social Security.

## **THE DECADE OF THE 1990s**

Social Security had its status in the government upgraded when it became an independent agency in the federal government in March 1995. This means the Commissioner of Social Security reports directly to the President. Under the 1994 legislation, the periodic Social Security Advisory Councils were abolished and a permanent seven-member bipartisan Social Security Advisory Board was formed to provide independent advice and counsel on Social Security. Welfare reform legislation, signed by President Clinton in August 1996, eliminated the old Aid to Families with Dependent Children program from the original Social Security Act and replaced it with new time-limited benefits linked to a work requirement. The legislation also terminated SSI eligibility for most non citizens (this provision was scaled-back somewhat in 1997). Also the eligibility rules for awarding SSI disability benefits to children were tightened. On December 17, 1999, the “Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999” became law, providing disability beneficiaries with a voucher they may use to obtain vocational rehabilitation services, employment services, and other support services from an employment network of their choice. In addition to allowing beneficiaries to obtain vocational services, the law provides incentive payments to providers for successful rehabilitations in which the beneficiary returns to work. The provisions also provide a number of safeguards to the beneficiaries to protect their benefits and health.

## **The New Millennium**

On April 7, 2000, President Clinton signed into law H.R. 5, “The Senior Citizens’ Freedom to Work Act of 2000,” eliminating the Retirement Earnings Test for beneficiaries at or above full retirement age. (The test still applies to beneficiaries below the full retirement age.) This allowed approximately 900,000 people who were collecting benefits but also working to not have their benefits reduced because of work. The aim of this bill was to avoid penalizing seniors who choose to work in retirement.

On May 1, 2001, President George W. Bush appointed a 16-member bipartisan “President’s Commission to Strengthen Social Security.” In December 2001, the Commission held its final meeting and voted unanimously to approve the Draft Final Report. The Commission offered three possible scenarios for how personal accounts might be introduced into the Social Security program. The report also recommended that “there be a period of <national> discussion...before legislative action is taken to strengthen and restore sustainability to Social Security.”

At the start of his second term, in his State-of-the-Union address, President Bush emphasized the need to “pass reforms that solve the financial problems of Social Security once and for all.” The President established basic principles to guide reform, including the “guarantee that there is no change for those now retired or nearing retirement” and that “any changes in the system are gradual.” He has pledged to work with Congress to find the most effective combination of reforms to strengthen Social Security for future generations.

Administratively, the “Ticket to Work” regulations were finalized in late 2001, and the program launched in the first set of states in early 2002. In recent years, improvements have been made to enhance the integrity of Social Security numbers, to guard against “identify theft,” to ease the wage reporting burdens on small businesses and to streamline the processing of disability claims. In late 2003, President Bush signed into law the Medicare Prescription Drug Improvement and Modernization Act. The Social Security Administration has significant administrative responsibilities in the implementation of this law. In 2004, the President signed into law the Social Security Protection Act (improving the management of the representative payee process) and the Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act. Social Security has grown to become a major facet of modern life. One in six Americans receives a Social Security benefit, and about 98 percent of all workers are in jobs covered by Social Security. From 1940, when slightly more than 222,000 people received monthly Social Security benefits, until today, when more than 47 million people receive such benefits, Social Security has grown steadily. The SSI program, meanwhile, provides income support to more than seven million people.

## THE GROWTH OF SOCIAL SECURITY

### PROGRAM GROWTH

Social Security			SSI		
Year	Beneficiaries	Dollars (b)	Year	Beneficiaries (c)	Dollars (d)
1937	53,236 (a)	\$1,278,000	1974	3,996,064	\$5,096,813,000
1938	213,670 (a)	\$10,478,000	1975	4,314,275	\$5,716,072,000
1939	174,839 (a)	\$13,896,000	1980	4,142,017	\$7,714,640,000
1940(e)	222,488	\$35,000,000	1985	4,138,021	\$10,749,938,000
1950	3,477,243	\$961,000,000	1990	4,817,127	\$16,132,959,000
1960	14,844,589	\$11,245,000,000	1995	6,514,134	\$27,037,280,000

1970	26,228,629	\$31,884,000,000	2000	6,601,686	\$30,671,699,000
1980	35,584,955	\$120,598,000,000	2001	6,688,489	\$32,165,856,000
1990	39,832,125	\$247,816,000,000	2002	6,787,857	\$33,718,999,000
2000	45,414,794	\$407,635,000,000	2003	6,902,364	\$34,693,278,000
2001	45,877,506	\$431,931,000,000	2004	6,987,845	\$36,065,358,000
2002	46,444,317	\$453,821,000,000			
2003	47,038,486	\$470,778,000,000			
2004	47,687,722	\$493,212,000,000			

a. Recipients of one-time lump-sum payments.

b. Benefit payments only.

c. Recipients of federally administered payments only.

d. Includes both federal payment and federally administered state supplementation payments.

e. Start of monthly retirement benefits under Social Security; prior years are single lump-sum payouts only.

## KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIAL SECURITY

**06/08/34:** Federal legislation to promote economic security was recommended in President Roosevelt's Message to Congress.

**06/29/34:** President Roosevelt created the Committee on Economic Security to study the problems related to economic security and to make recommendations for a program of legislation.

**01/17/35:** The Committee on Economic Security's recommendations were introduced in the 74th Congress.

**04/19/35:** The Social Security Act was passed in the House of Representatives, 372 to 33.

**06/19/35:** The Social Security Act was passed in the Senate by a vote of 77 to 6.

**08/14/35:** The Social Security Act became law with President Roosevelt's signature.

**08/23/35:** The Senate confirmed the President's nomination of the original members of the Social Security Board: John G. Winant, Chairman; Arthur J. Altmeyer; and Vincent M. Miles.

**10/36:** The first Social Security field office was opened in Austin, Texas.

**11/09/36:** The Baltimore office for record-keeping operations opened in the Candler Building.

**11/24/36:** Applications for Social Security account numbers were first distributed by the Post Office.

**01/01/37:** Workers began to acquire credits toward old-age insurance benefits — payroll taxes collected for the first time.

**01/37:** First applications for benefits filed. Ernest Ackerman, a retired Cleveland motorman, was among the first to apply.

**03/11/37:** First Social Security benefits paid (one-time payment only).

**07/01/39:** Under the Federal Reorganization Act of 1939, the Social Security Board was made part of the newly established Federal Security Agency (FSA).

**08/10/39:** The Social Security Amendments of 1939 broadened the program to include dependents and survivors benefits.

**01/31/40:** Ida May Fuller became the first person to receive an old-age monthly benefit check.

**07/16/46:** Under the President's Reorganization Plan of 1946, the Social Security Board was abolished and the Social Security Administration was established. Arthur J. Altmeyer was appointed as the first Commissioner.

**08/28/50:** President Truman signed the 1950 Social Security Amendments.

**04/11/53:** President Eisenhower abolished the FSA and created a new Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). Social Security was made part of this new cabinet agency.

**09/01/54:** Social Security Amendments established a disability "freeze" to help prevent the erosion of a disabled worker's benefits.

**08/01/56:** The Social Security Act was amended to provide monthly benefits to permanently and totally disabled workers aged 50-64 and for adult children of deceased or retired workers, if disabled before age 18.

**06/30/61:** The Social Security Amendments of 1961 were signed by President John Kennedy, permitting all workers to elect reduced retirement at age 62.

**07/30/65:** President Johnson signed the Medicare bill at the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Mo.

**10/12/66:** President Johnson visited Social Security headquarters to participate in the 15th Annual Honor Awards Ceremony — the only visit by a President.

**07/01/72:** President Nixon signed into law P.L. 92-336 which authorized a 20 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective 9/92, and established the procedures for issuing automatic annual COLAs beginning in 1975.

**10/30/72:** Social Security Amendments of 1972 signed into law by President Nixon — creating the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

**01/01/74:** SSI program went into operation as a result of the Social Security Amendments of 1972.

**03/09/77:** HEW reorganization plan was published in Federal Register, creating the Health Care Financing Administration to manage the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

**05/4/80:** HEW was abolished and replaced by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Social Security became a part of HHS at this time.

**06/09/80:** President Carter signed the Social Security Amendments of 1980. Major provisions involved greater work incentives for disabled Social Security and SSI beneficiaries and continuing disability reviews.

**08/13/81:** The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981 made numerous changes in Social Security, SSI and AFDC. These included: a phasing out of student's benefits; stopping young parents benefits when a child reached 16; limiting the lumpsum death payment and changes in the minimum benefit.

**01/20/83:** The National Commission on Social Security Reform sent its recommendations for resolving the Social Security program's financial problems to the President and Congress.

**04/20/83:** President Reagan signed into law the Social Security Amendments of 1983.

**10/09/84:** Disability Benefits Reform Act of 1984 signed by President Reagan.

**06/06/86:** President Reagan signed the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) Act, which established Social Security coverage for federal employees hired after December 31, 1983.

**10/01/88:** Social Security's nationwide 800-number telephone service implemented.

**05/17/94:** Social Security's Internet site (*Social Security Online*) was launched on the World-Wide Web.

**03/31/95:** Social Security became an independent agency.

**09/25/03:** At a hearing before the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, Commissioner Barnhart presented an approach to improving the disability determination process that would shorten decision times, pay benefits faster to people who are obviously disabled, and test new incentives for those with disabilities who wish to remain in, or return to, the workforce.

**12/08/03:** President Bush signed into law the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003.

**03/02/04:** President Bush signed into law H.R. 743, the Social Security Protection Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-203). This law contains more than 50 main provisions, many affecting the conduct of representative payees under the law, as well as a wide variety of other administrative and technical matters.

**07/15/04:** President Bush signed into law H.R. 1731, the Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act, which imposes criminal penalties for theft of another person's identity, including for purposes of obtaining Social Security-related benefits.

**01/26/05:** Mississippi became the first state to fully implement Social Security's new fully electronic disability application process under its eDib initiative.

## **AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY**

*This list summarizes the major organizational change to the agency over the years:*

### **The Social Security Board is Created**

The Social Security Administration began life as the Social Security Board (SSB). The SSB was created at the moment President Roosevelt inked his signature on the Social Security Act (August 14, 1935). The SSB was an entirely new entity, with no staff, no facilities and no budget. The initial personnel were donated from existing agencies, and a temporary budget was obtained from the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. The Board itself consisted of three executives appointed by the President and such staff as they needed to hire.

### **The Federal Security Agency Absorbs the Board**

On 7/1/39, the Social Security Board lost its independent agency status when the new sub-cabinet level Federal Security Agency was created. The FSA encompassed the SSB, the Public Health Service, the Office of Education, the Civilian Conservation Corps and the U.S. Employment Service.

### **Agency is Created**

On 7/16/46, under the President's Reorganization Plan of 1946, the SSB was replaced by the Social Security Administration, under the leadership of a Commissioner. Arthur Altmeyer, who had been chairman of the Board of the SSB, became Social Security's first Commissioner.

### **HEW Replaces the Federal Security Agency**

On 4/11/53, President Eisenhower abolished the FSA and created anew Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). Social Security was made part of this new cabinet agency.

### **HEW Replaced by HHS**

On 5/4/80, the Department of Health and Human Services replaced HEW. Social Security was a major part of HHS until it returned to its original status as an independent agency.

### **Social Security Becomes an Independent Agency**

Throughout the years, arguments had been made that Social Security should be returned to independent agency status. This debate was given impetus in 1981 when the National Commission on Social Security recommended that the agency once again become an independent Social Security Board. The 1983 National Commission on Social Security Reform (a.k.a., the Greenspan Commission) again raised this issue and recommended a special study be commissioned of the matter. This special study was completed in 1984, and it outlined several options for making Social Security an independent agency. This led to numerous legislative proposals in the ensuing years and in 1994 the legislation passed both houses of Congress unanimously making Social Security, once again, an independent agency. President Clinton signed the bill on August 15, 1994 (59 years and one day after FDR signed the original Act). The change took effect on March 31, 1995.

## A Brief Examination of Social Security

(summary version)

For decades, the United States has sustained an era of economic prosperity that has often led citizens to take Social Security for granted. However, when facing the current recession and economic downturn that has many fearing a second Great Depression, Americans should certainly be reminded of days when economic prosperity was not the norm. It was these times of economic calamity that resulted in the rise and development of Social Security.

### *The Rise of Social Security*

Social Security was one of the many government programs that emerged out of the Great Depression, a time when unemployment reached devastatingly high levels and the economy ground to a halt. Following his plans of increased government spending as a method of restoring prosperity, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt announced his plan to establish a Social Security program in America in his Message to Congress on June 8, 1934. Shortly after, the Committee on Economic Security was created by Executive Order to study the problems of economic security and provide suggestions to Congress for consideration. The *Social Security Act* was passed on August 15, 1935, laying the groundwork for the system we have today. This Act provided income to retired workers over the age of 65.

### *Implementation*

Implementation of the *Social Security Act* would prove to be a massive feat. In accordance with the law, the Social Security Board needed to devise a method of reporting and accounting that would satisfy employees, employers, and the public. Furthermore, the Act also suggested both employers and employees be registered by January 1, 1937. The Social Security Board lacked the resources for such massive implementation, and enlisted the United States Postal Service for assistance. The Postal Service issued over 35 million Social Security cards between 1936 and 1937. On January 1, 1937, the program was up and running. As a temporary measure, the program collected dues and issued one lump-sum payment to retirees.

### *The First Amendments*

The *Social Security Act* was amended in 1939, revamping much of the system and enacting many changes that survive today. The amendments expanded benefits to include spouses and minor children as beneficiaries and survivor benefits to the families of deceased workers. In addition, the *Federal Insurance Contributions Act* (FICA) was passed in 1939, creating the payroll taxes that exist today to fund Social Security. Finally, the 1939 legislation moved up the issuing of monthly benefit payments from 1942 to 1940, ending the issuance of lump-sum payments. Ida May Fuller of Ludlow, Vermont was the first recipient of a monthly retirement check on January 31, 1940. She received \$22.54.

Until 1950, only 50 percent of American workers were covered by Social Security. The amendments of 1950 worked to extend coverage in a step toward the universal coverage we have today. These amendments also increased benefits for the first time in the fledgling program's history, issuing a staggering 77% increase. However, cost of living adjustments (COLAs) were not enacted until 1972, and did not begin until 1975. COLAs provided for automatic yearly payment increases to make up for inflation. The 1972 law also initiated wage-indexing of a retiree's initial benefit amount to coincide with standards of living. Together, the provisions of the 1972 law established automatic benefit adjustments for both price and wage inflation.

### *New Programs*

Many new programs were added to Social Security in the 1950s. The 1954 Amendments began a disability insurance program, providing disabled workers with additional economic security. At first, a disability "freeze" was placed on workers' Social Security records during the time they were unable to work, thereby preventing periods of disability from decreasing or eliminating retirement and survivor benefits. The 1956 Amendments changed this to provide cash benefits to disabled workers

aged 50-65 and disabled adult children. The scope of this program was expanded over the next few years as Congress offered benefits to the dependants of disabled workers, and eventually to disabled workers of all ages.

The 1960s brought even bigger changes to Social Security programs. First of all, the eligibility age for men was lowered to 62 in 1961 (this option had been granted to women in 1956). More importantly, Medicare was created, extending health coverage to Social Security beneficiaries over the age of 65.

Another major program was added to Social Security in 1972 – Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI is a needs-based program for disabled, blind, and elderly individuals that grew out of the “adult categories” of welfare.

### *Financial Troubles*

The economic turmoil of the late 1970s and early 1980s produced a pessimistic reality for the financial security of Social Security; it quickly became clear that the system would have to be reformed in order to survive. In response to this crisis, President Ronald Reagan appointed a “blue ribbon commission,” also known as the Greenspan commission, to propose changes to the Social Security system. President Reagan signed the final bill into law in April 1983. These provisions included a partial taxation of Social Security benefits, coverage of federal employees, Social Security Trust reserve increases, and a gradual increase of the retirement age beginning in 2000.

### *Beyond the Millennium*

As the end of the millennium approached, a joint effort of the Social Security Administration and the Clinton administration introduced a program geared towards worker rehabilitation. The *Ticket to Work Incentives Improvement Act* of 1999 was signed into law on December 17, 1999. It provided disability beneficiaries with vouchers for vocational rehabilitation and employment services. Furthermore, on April 7, 2000, President Clinton signed the *Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act*, eliminating a measure reducing the benefits of working senior citizens.

President George W. Bush too looked to reform the struggling Social Security system. On May 1, 2001, President Bush appointed the sixteen-member bipartisan Commission to Strengthen Social Security to review the system. They later provided three possible methods of including personal accounts in Social Security programs in an effort to restore financial security to Social Security. On December 8, 2003, President Bush signed the *Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act*, requiring Social Security to take over several additional Medicare-related responsibilities and work together to provide limited income citizens with extra help paying for their prescription drugs.

### *The Growth of Social Security*

The breadth and provisions of Social Security have increased dramatically since President Roosevelt first signed the *Social Security Act* in 1935. 49 million Americans now receive Social Security benefits, while only 222,488 did in 1940. Today, Social Security encompasses numerous programs, including Federal Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance, Unemployment benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medicare, Medicaid, the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

*United States of America. Social Security Administration. Social Security: A Brief History. Oct. 2007. Social Security Administration. 16 July 2009 <<http://www.ssa.gov/history/pdf/2007historybooklet.pdf>>.*

## Social Security Timeline Activity

Students should fill the blank spaces in the following timeline, using the two articles on the history of Social Security. Students will also need to conduct a little research into the Great Depression/New Deal era as well.

**October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1929:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ : First Inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt

**June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1934:** President Roosevelt created the Committee on Economic Security to study the problems related to economic security and to make recommendations for a program of legislation.

**August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1935:** \_\_\_\_\_

**August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1935:** The Senate confirmed the President's nomination of the original members of the Social Security Board: John G. Winant, Chairman; Arthur J. Altmeyer; and Vincent M. Miles.

**October 1936:** The first Social Security field office was opened in Austin, Texas.

\_\_\_\_\_ : First Social Security benefits paid (one-time payment only).

**July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939:** Under the Federal Reorganization Act of 1939, the Social Security Board was made part of the newly established Federal Security Agency (FSA).

**January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1940:** \_\_\_\_\_

**July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1946:** Under the President's Reorganization Plan of 1946, the Social Security Board was abolished and the Social Security Administration was established. Arthur J. Altmeyer was appointed as the first Commissioner.

\_\_\_\_\_ : President Eisenhower abolished the FSA and created a new Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). Social Security was made part of this new cabinet agency.

**August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1956:** The Social Security Act was amended to provide monthly benefits to permanently and totally disabled workers aged 50-64 and for adult children of deceased or retired workers, if disabled before age 18.

**June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1961:** \_\_\_\_\_

**July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1965:** President Johnson signed the Medicare bill at the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Mo.

**July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1972:** President Nixon signed into law P.L. 92-336 which authorized a 20 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), effective 9/92, and established the procedures for issuing automatic annual COLAs beginning in 1975.

**October 30<sup>th</sup>, 72:** \_\_\_\_\_

**May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1980:** HEW was abolished and replaced by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Social Security became a part of HHS at this time.

\_\_\_\_\_ : President Carter signed the Social Security Amendments of 1980. Major provisions involved greater work incentives for disabled Social Security and SSI beneficiaries and continuing disability reviews.

\_\_\_\_\_ : The National Commission on Social Security Reform sent its recommendations for resolving the Social Security program's financial problems to the President and Congress.

**June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1986:** President Reagan signed the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) Act, which established Social Security coverage for federal employees hired after December 31, 1983.

**October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1988:** Social Security's nationwide 800-number telephone service implemented.

**March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1995:** \_\_\_\_\_

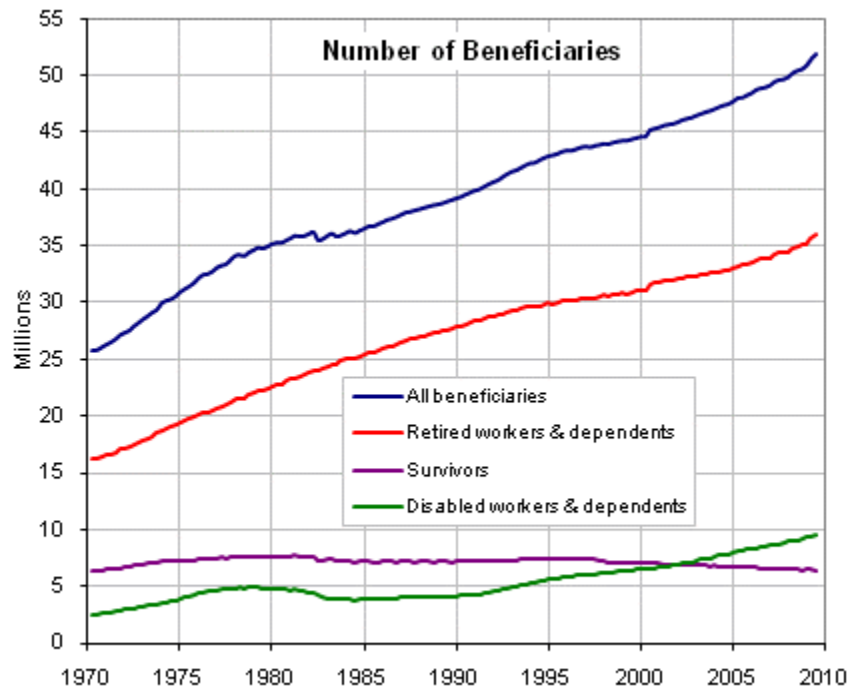
**May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001:** \_\_\_\_\_

**December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003:** President Bush signed into law the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003.

## Statistics Regarding the Future of Social Security

<b>Annual Benefits Depend on How Much You Earn and Pay in Tax</b>			
	Low Earner	<b>Average Earner</b>	High Earner
Annual Earnings	\$16,700	<b>\$37,200</b>	\$74,500
Social Security % of Earnings Replaced if Claimed at Age 65	56%	<b>41%</b>	30%
Annual Benefits if Claimed at Age 65	\$9,400	<b>\$15,400</b>	\$22,500
<b>They Also Depend on When You Claim</b>			
Annual Benefit if Claimed in 2003, at Age 62 (2006 Dollars)		<b>\$12,400</b>	
Annual Benefit if Claimed in 2011, at Age 70 (2006 Dollars)		<b>\$21,400</b>	

Number of Social Security Beneficiaries, 1970-2010



<https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/ProgData/icpGraph.html>

## Save Social Security!



### Simulation Role Play

#### Simulation Overview:

With the tremendous increase in Baby Boomer retirees on the horizon, the Social Security program as it currently exists won't be able to pay all its bills in the next thirty years. The very real danger to young people is that by the time you retire, you may get much less from Social Security, or maybe nothing at all. The good news: the collapse of Social Security is not inevitable, and the Social Security program can be saved. The bad news: reforming Social Security will not be easy, and requires difficult political choices. Your task in this simulation is to analyze possible solutions, and devise a multi-faceted plan to save Social Security. We will assume that Social Security in some form must continue, i.e., doing away with Social Security is not an option.

#### Task:

With public pressure to act mounting, Congress has authorized the formation of a bi-partisan Social Security Task Force (SSTF). The SSTF will consist of both Democrats and Republicans, former and current members of the executive branch and Congress, experts from academia, key interest group stake holders, and private citizens. The objective of the Task Force is to analyze the current crisis, investigate possible solutions, and make recommendations to Congress as to a course of action to save Social Security.

NOTE: For the purpose of the simulation, the current President is a Democrat, Democrats enjoy a majority in the House of Representatives, but Republicans hold a slim 51-49 majority in the U.S. Senate.

#### Directions:

1. *Stage 1 – Role Assignment (5-10 minutes)*
  - The class should form a circle so that all members can be clearly seen and heard.
  - Students draw a role from a hat OR the teacher assigns roles. Each student is expected to play the role as authentically as possible during the course of the simulation.
2. *Stage 2 – Personal Action Plan (5-10 minutes)*
  - Members of the task force must first write down possible solutions to the Social Security crisis based on the description of their character
3. *Stage 3 – Social Security Task Force Brainstorm Session (10-15 minutes)*
  - The co-chairpersons of the SSTF lead discussion and ask the group to brainstorm possible solutions to fix Social Security. It is important that all students make suggestions based upon the role they are given, and consistent with the facts about Social Security.
  - During this session, all ideas should be considered and recorded on the chalkboard or poster board.
4. *Stage 4 – Social Security Task Force Action Plan (30-40 minutes)*
  - In this stage, members of the SSTF now begin to eliminate some suggestions, and formalize a plan of action through compromise and consensus.
  - The written Save Social Security Action Plan must include the following:
    - a) Identification and brief explanation of SSTF recommended solution(s) to fix Social Security.
    - b) A cost and benefit analysis for each solution recommended (i.e. pro's and con's).
  - The SSFT presents its action plan to Congress, the President and the public (the SSTF co-chairs or designees make a brief presentation to the class).
5. *Stage 5 – Simulation Debriefing (10 minutes)*
  - Students may now step out of their roles and respond to the following questions:
    - a) What was realistic about this simulation and what was not?
    - b) What course of action should be taken to save Social Security?

- c) In the real world, what do you think the prospects are for fixing Social Security in the near future? Explain your answer.

### **Social Security Facts to Consider**

- ❖ Social Security includes many programs such as old age, survivors and disability insurance, but the primary benefits we will address here include payments to retirees.
- ❖ Social Security is a government entitlement program whose benefits must be paid by law.
- ❖ *Entitlement programs* like Social Security guarantee that all Americans receive benefits by federal law. As an entitlement program, Social Security is part of the federal budget labeled *mandatory spending*, which means that Social Security outlays must be funded by law.
- ❖ Social Security outlays or expenditures constitute about 20.8% of the federal budget each fiscal year.
- ❖ The current minimum age to receive full retirement Social Security benefits is 65 (partial benefits may be paid at 62). All Americans over the age of 65 are eligible to receive Social Security regardless of income (i.e. there is no means test).
- ❖ Social Security is a completely self-funded program through payroll deductions paid by employers and employees called the FICA tax. The current withholding FICA payroll tax rate is about 6.20% of the gross wage amount. Employers must also pay the same 6.20% tax for each worker (12.40% total).
- ❖ The current working generation pays for the benefits of the retired generation.
- ❖ Right now, there is a Social Security surplus because the Baby Boom generation (1946-1964) is much larger than the World War II generation.
- ❖ The Baby Boom generation is also much larger than the succeeding Generation X and Millennials.
- ❖ The current surplus is placed in the Social Security Trust Fund. In 2007 the cumulative excess paid-in contributions over benefit outlays stood at \$2.2 trillion. However, the trust fund has been depleted in recent years because the federal government has borrowed money to fund other programs.
- ❖ If Social Security remains as it is today, current projections show that the Social Security Trust Fund will run out in the next 30 years or so when the bulk of the Baby Boomer generation retires (i.e. money paid out in benefits will exceed money paid into the system).
- ❖ Life expectancy for Americans has risen dramatically from 61.7 in 1935 when the original Social Security Act was passed to 77.8 in 2005.

## **Social Security Task Force Roles**

1. SSTF Co-chairperson – current Vice President, a liberal Democrat from Pennsylvania
2. SSTF Co-chairperson – retired U.S. Senator, a conservative Republican from Florida
3. Director of the Office of Management and Budget – a moderate Democrat serving in the current President’s administration who’s job is to make sure the President’s budget priorities are carried out
4. Director of the Congressional Budget Office – an economist who gives objective, non-partisan advice to Congress on budgetary issues
5. Chairperson of the House Ways and Means Committee – a liberal Democrat from New York
6. Senior Ranking Republican on House Ways and Means Committee – a conservative Republican from South Carolina
7. Chairperson of the Senate Finance Committee – a moderate Republican from Kansas
8. Commissioner of the Social Security Administration – has worked in the SSA for 25 years, and was appointed commissioner by the current president
9. Secretary of the Treasury – a moderate Democrat appointed by the current President
10. Former Secretary of the Treasury – a fiscal conservative appointed by a recent Republican president
11. Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board – though appointed by a Republican president, a fiscal pragmatist and ideological moderate
12. Secretary of Health and Human Services – a moderate Democrat from Missouri
13. Deputy White House Chief of Staff – a liberal Democrat loyal to the President and his agenda with expertise in Social Security and health care policy
14. Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform – liberal Democrat from California
15. Senior Ranking Republican on House Committee on Small Business – a pro-business Republican from Ohio
16. Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging – a moderate Republican from Nevada
17. Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transpiration – a moderate Republican from Indiana
18. Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Retirement and Aging – moderate Republican from Colorado
19. Vice President of the American Association of Retired Persons – represents that largest interest group serving seniors
20. Member of the Cato Institute – Libertarian interest group
21. John/Joan Q. Citizen – age 72, a retired auto worker and New Deal Democrat
22. John/Joan Q. Citizen – age 55, a high school teacher and a liberal Baby Boomer
23. John/Joan Q. Citizen – age 40, a Generation X banker
24. John/Joan Q. Citizen – age 25, a recent college graduate with computer science degree recently laid off from her/his job
25. Billionaire businessperson and philanthropist – acquired great wealth in the computer industry, but now devotes his life to liberal humanitarian causes
26. Billionaire real estate mogul – gained wealth through real estate investments; faithful GOP contributor
27. Evangelical Minister – pastor of a large megachurch in California that has championed causes against poverty
28. Latino American Activist – a champion of the poor, particular inner city Hispanics
29. Former NBC News Anchor – a 50 year journalism veteran, wrote a book called *The Greatest Generation*
30. Talk Radio Personality – conservative radio talk show host

<p><b>SSTF Co-chairperson</b> Current Vice President, a liberal Democrat from Pennsylvania</p>	<p><b>Former Secretary of the Treasury</b> Fiscal conservative appointed by a recent Republican president</p>	<p><b>Member of the Cato Institute</b> Libertarian interest group</p>
<p><b>SSTF Co-chairperson</b> Retired U.S. Senator, a conservative Republican from Florida</p>	<p><b>Federal Reserve Board Chairperson</b> Appointed by a Republican president, a fiscal pragmatist and ideological moderate</p>	<p><b>John/Joan Q. Citizen</b> Age 72, a retired auto worker and New Deal Democrat</p>
<p><b>Director of the Office of Management and Budget</b> Moderate Democrat serving in the current President's administration</p>	<p><b>Secretary of Health and Human Services</b> Moderate Democrat from Missouri</p>	<p><b>John/Joan Q. Citizen</b> Age 55, a high school teacher and liberal Baby Boomer</p>
<p><b>Director of the Congressional Budget Office Director</b> Economist who gives objective, non-partisan advice to Congress on budgetary issues</p>	<p><b>Deputy White House Chief of Staff</b> Liberal Democrat loyal to the President and his agenda with expertise in Social Security and health care policy</p>	<p><b>John/Joan Q. Citizen</b> Age 40, Generation X banker</p>
<p><b>Chairperson of the House Ways and Means Committee</b> Liberal Democrat from New York</p>	<p><b>House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairperson</b> Liberal Democrat from California</p>	<p><b>John/Joan Q. Citizen</b> Age 25, a recent college graduate with computer science degree recently laid off from her/his job</p>
<p><b>House Ways and Means Committee Member</b> Conservative Republican from South Carolina</p>	<p><b>House Committee on Small Business Member</b> Pro-business Republican from Ohio</p>	<p><b>Billionaire</b> Businessperson and philanthropist who acquired great wealth in the computer industry, but now devotes his life to liberal humanitarian causes</p>
<p><b>Chairperson of the Senate Finance Committee</b> Moderate Republican from Kansas</p>	<p><b>Chairperson of the Senate Special Committee on Aging</b> Moderate Republican from Nevada</p>	<p><b>Real Estate Mogul</b> Gained wealth through real estate investments; faithful GOP contributor</p>
<p><b>Commissioner of the Social Security Administration</b> Worked in the SSA for 25 years, and was appointed commissioner by the current president</p>	<p><b>Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transpiration</b> Moderate Republican from Indiana</p>	<p><b>Evangelical Minister</b> Pastor of a large megachurch in California that has championed causes against poverty</p>
<p><b>Secretary of the Treasury</b> Moderate Democrat appointed by the current President</p>	<p><b>Chairperson of the Senate Subcommittee on Retirement and Aging</b> Moderate Republican from Colorado</p>	<p><b>Latino American Activist</b> Champion of the poor, particular inner city Hispanics</p>
<p><b>Vice President of the American Association of Retired Persons</b> Represents that largest interest group serving seniors</p>	<p><b>Former NBC News Anchor</b> 50 year journalism veteran, wrote a book called <i>The Greatest Generation</i></p>	<p><b>Talk Radio Personality</b> Conservative radio talk show host</p>

