

# TOM COTTON'S FAILURE TO PROTECT SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

## Highlights:

- Tom Cotton voted to raise the eligibility age for Social Security and Medicare at least four times.
  - Cotton voted at least twice to raise the Medicare retirement age to 67 and even up to 70.
  - Cotton voted at least twice to raise the Social Security full retirement age from 67 to 70.
- Tom Cotton voted to cut Medicare and Social Security at least seven times.
  - In 2017, Cotton voted for the GOP tax reform bill, which experts said could cause some lawmakers to cut Medicare spending.
  - In 2017, Cotton voted for \$473 billion in cuts to Medicare.
  - In 2015, Cotton supported a budget resolution which would have cut Medicare.
  - In 2014, Cotton voted for a budget that would have cut programs including Medicare by trillions.
  - In 2013, Cotton effectively voted to reduce funding for Medicare and Social Security.
- Tom Cotton supported privatizing Social Security and Medicare.
  - In 2015, Cotton effectively voted against making it harder to privatize Social Security.
  - In 2014, Cotton effectively voted against prohibiting a bill that established a Medicare voucher program.
  - In 2013, Cotton voted in favor of replacing Medicare with a premium support plan.
  - In 2013, Cotton effectively voted against prohibiting the use of funds to establish a Medicare voucher system
  - In 2011, Cotton supported Paul Ryan's budget, which would have turned Medicare into a premium support plan.
- Tom Cotton opposed Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).
  - In 2015, Cotton proposed a reduction in the number of SSDI beneficiaries.
  - In 2013, Cotton co-sponsored legislation to reduce the number of people eligible for SSDI.
- Tom Cotton supported efforts to means test Medicare.

## Cotton Voted To Raise The Eligibility Age For Social Security And Medicare At Least Four Times

### COTTON VOTED AT LEAST TWICE TO RAISE THE MEDICARE RETIREMENT AGE

**2013: Cotton Voted To Raise The Medicare Eligibility Age To 70 Over 20 Years.** In March 2013, Cotton voted to support raising the Medicare eligibility age to 70 over 20 years, as part of the Republican Study Committee's proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2014 to 2023. According to the Republican Study Committee, "To address the increased demands on Medicare, this budget proposes raising the age of Medicare eligibility, beginning in 2024, by two months every year beginning with those born in 1959 until the eligibility age reaches 70, bringing Medicare eligibility in parity with Social Security." The vote was on an amendment to the House budget resolution replacing the entire budget with the RSC's proposed budget; the amendment failed by a vote of 104 to 132 with 171 Democrats voting present. According to Congressional Quarterly, "Repeating a strategy from last year, 171 Democrats voted "present" to push Republicans to vote against the RSC plan to make sure it did not have enough support to replace the Ryan plan." [House Vote 86, [3/21/13](#); Republican Study Committee, 3/18/13; Congressional Quarterly, [3/25/13](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Amdt. 35](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 25](#)]

- **CBPP: Increasing Medicare Eligibility Age Would Leave Many 65- And 66-Year-Olds Uninsured.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “This means 65- and 66-year-olds would have neither Medicare nor access to health insurance exchanges in which they could buy coverage at an affordable price and receive subsidies to help them secure coverage if their incomes are low. This change would put many more 65- and 66-year-olds who don’t have employer coverage into the individual insurance market, where the premiums charged to people in this age group tend to be extremely high — thereby leaving many of them uninsured.” [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [3/20/12](#)]
- **Raising The Medicare Eligibility Age To 67 Would Have Resulted In \$3.7 Billion In Increased Out-Of-Pocket Costs To Seniors Aged 65 And 66.** According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, “In the aggregate, raising the age of eligibility to 67 in 2014 is projected to result in an estimated net increase of \$3.7 billion in out of -pocket costs for those ages 65 and 66 who would otherwise have been covered by Medicare.” [Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2011]
- **Costs To Employers Would Increase By \$4.5 Billion And Costs To States By \$700 Million.** According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, “costs to employers are projected to increase by \$4.5 billion in 2014 and costs to states are expected to increase by \$0.7 billion.” [Kaiser Family Foundation, July 2011]
- **Increasing The Medicare Eligibility Age Would Raise The Costs Of Health Care Across The Economy.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “raising Medicare’s eligibility age would not only fail to constrain health care costs across the economy; it would raise them. Medicare provides health coverage more cheaply than private health insurance plans because it has lower administrative costs and pays less to providers. Raising the Medicare age would shift costs to most of the 65- and 66-year olds who would lose Medicare coverage, to remaining Medicare beneficiaries, to employers that provide coverage for their retirees, and to states. These cost increases would, in total, more than offset the savings to the federal government.” [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [3/28/12](#)]

#### **2014: Cotton Voted To Raise The Medicare Retirement Age From 65 To 67 As Part Of Rep. Paul Ryan’s Budget Proposal.**

In April 2014, Cotton voted for House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan’s (R-WI) proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2015 to 2024. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Starting in 2024, the Ryan budget would raise Medicare’s eligibility age — now 65 — by two months per year until it reaches age 67 in 2035.” The House adopted the budget resolution by a vote of 219 to 205, but the Senate did not. [House Vote 177, [4/10/14](#); Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [4/8/14](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 96](#)]

- **Because Ryan’s Plan Would Have Also Repealed The ACA, Seniors Aged 65 And 66 Without Employer Coverage Would Have Faced High Premium Costs Due To Their Age – Or Might Be Unable To Obtain Any Insurance Due To A Pre-Existing Condition.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “At the same time, the plan would repeal health reform’s coverage provisions. Consequently, 65- and 66-year-olds would have neither Medicare nor access to health insurance exchanges in which they could buy coverage at an affordable price and receive subsidies to help them secure coverage if their incomes are low. This change would drive 65- and 66-year-olds who don’t have employer-sponsored coverage into an individual insurance market that would be poorly regulated (since the Ryan plan repeals the Affordable Care Act’s insurance reforms) and would charge older individuals extremely high premiums. People of limited means would be affected most harshly because they would not be able to afford private coverage. In addition, 65- and 66-year-olds with a pre-existing medical condition often would not be able to purchase coverage at any price. As a result, many 65- and 66-year-olds would find themselves uninsured.” [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [4/8/14](#)]
- **The Loss Of Relatively Healthy 65- And 66-Year Olds From Medicare Would Have Raised Premiums For Remaining Medicare Beneficiaries.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “All remaining Medicare beneficiaries would pay higher premiums because the removal of 65- and 66-year-olds, who are typically healthier than Medicare beneficiaries overall, would leave Medicare beneficiaries costlier to cover, on average.” [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [4/8/14](#)]

#### **Cotton Repeatedly Spoke Out In Support Of Ryan’s Budgets**

**VIDEO: Cotton Expressed “Strong Support” For Paul Ryan’s Budget.** According to C-SPAN via YouTube, “COTTON: I rise in strong support of this budget resolution. I just want to take a moment to applaud the chairman and the

members of his committee, and especially the hard-working staff of his committee, for producing this document.” [C-SPAN via YouTube, [3/19/13](#)]

**Cotton Lauded Ryan’s Plan To “Fix” Medicare.** According to his personal Twitter account, Cotton tweeted, “Medicare needs reform, and @RepPaulRyan has a bipartisan plan to fix it: <http://bit.ly/sBZnL4> . #ar4 #argop #tcot” [Twitter, @tomcottonAR, [12/15/11](#)]

## **COTTON VOTED TO RAISE THE SOCIAL SECURITY FULL RETIREMENT AGE FROM 67 TO 70 AT LEAST TWICE**

**2014: Cotton Voted To Raise The Social Security Full Retirement Age From 67 To 70.** In April 2014, Cotton voted for the Republican Study Committee’s proposed budget resolution for fiscal years 2015 to 2024. According to the Republican Study Committee, “As a result of the bipartisan Social Security Amendments of 1983 (P.L. 98-21), an increase of the Social Security full retirement age is being phased in over time - beginning at 65 and reaching 67 by 2022 for those born in 1960 and later. This budget proposes to continue a gradual increase of two months per year until the full retirement age reaches 70. Under this plan, for individuals born in 1962 the retirement age will be 67 and two months. The full retirement age will reach 70 for individuals born in 1979 or later.” The House considered the RSC budget as a substitute amendment to House Republicans’ FY 2015 budget resolution; the amendment was rejected by a vote of 133 to 291. [House Vote 175, [4/10/14](#); Republican Study Committee, 4/7/14; Congressional Actions, [H. Amdt. 615](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 96](#)]

**2013: Cotton Voted To Raise The Social Security Eligibility Age To 70.** In March 2013, Cotton voted to support raising the Social Security eligibility age, as part of the Republican Study Committee’s proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2014 to 2023. According to the Republican Study Committee, “This budget would slowly phase in an increase in the Social Security full retirement age for individuals born in 1962 (currently 51) and after to an eventual full retirement age of 70.” The vote was on an amendment to the House budget resolution replacing the entire budget with the RSC’s proposed budget; the amendment failed by a vote of 104 to 132 with 171 Democrats voting present. According to Congressional Quarterly, “Repeating a strategy from last year, 171 Democrats voted “present” to push Republicans to vote against the RSC plan to make sure it did not have enough support to replace the Ryan plan.” [House Vote 86, [3/21/13](#); Republican Study Committee, 3/18/13; Congressional Quarterly, [3/25/13](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Amdt. 35](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 25](#)]

- **Raising The Social Security Retirement Age To 69 Years And Eight Months Would Push 1.5 Million Future Retirees Into Poverty.** According to the Urban Institute, “Overall, increasing the NRA to 69 and 8 months and the EEA to 65 [...] does not hit lower-income groups harder than others, it does push more retirees below the poverty level. As compared to currently scheduled benefits, raising the retirement age would increase the share of retirees with incomes below the wage-indexed poverty level in 2050 from 14.4 percent to 16.2 percent, an increase of 1.5 million people. [Urban Institute, December 2006]
- **CBPP: Raising The Eligibility Age Would Be “An Across-The-Board Cut In Benefits For All Retirees,” No Matter What Age An Individual Retires.** According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “[A]ny increase in the full retirement age amounts to an across-the-board cut in benefits for all retirees regardless of the age at which they file — including people who do not retire until 67 or even 70.” [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [2/17/11](#)]

## **Cotton Voted To Cut Medicare And Social Security At Least Seven Times**

### **2017: COTTON VOTED FOR A BILL THAT COULD LEAD TO MEDICARE CUTS**

**2017: Cotton Voted For The Senate GOP’s Tax Reform Bill.** In December 2017, Cotton voted for the Senate’s version of Trump’s tax reform bill. According to Congressional Quarterly, “Passage of the bill, as amended, that would revise the federal income tax system by lowering individual and corporate tax rates, repealing various deductions through 2025, specifically by eliminating the deduction for state and local income taxes through 2025, increasing the deduction for pass-through entities and raising the child tax credit through 2025. It would also open parts of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling.” The vote was on passage. The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 51 to 49. President Trump later signed an amended version of the bill into law. [Senate Vote 303, [12/2/17](#); Congressional Quarterly, [12/2/17](#); Congressional Actions, [H.R. 1](#)]

## The Legislation Could Cause Some Lawmakers To Cut Medicare Spending

**American Journal Of Public Health: The Tax Cuts And Jobs Act Could Cause Some Lawmakers To Target Medicare Spending.** According to the American Journal of Public Health, “Some in Congress are likely to argue that the growing US debt—including the increase generated by the TCJA—must be offset by reductions in spending. The most likely target of such spending reductions will be entitlement programs, particularly Medicare, Social Security, and Medicaid, which already constitute a significant share of federal spending and are expected to grow rapidly in the near future.” [American Journal of Public Health, [June 2018](#)]

## **2017: COTTON VOTED FOR \$473 BILLION IN MEDICARE CUTS**

**2017: Cotton Voted For The GOP FY 2018 Budget Resolution, Which Started The Process Towards Tax Reform And Called For Cutting Medicare By \$473 Billion.** In October 2017, Cotton voted for a budget resolution that would have, according to The Hill, “The spending blueprint is key to Republicans’ efforts to pass tax reform because it includes instructions that will allow the plan to avoid a Democratic filibuster. [...] The budget, meant to outline spending for the fiscal year, was widely viewed as a mere vehicle for passing tax reform. [...] The budget would allow the Senate GOP’s tax plan to add up to \$1.5 trillion to the deficit over a decade, a proposal that has raised concerns with fiscal hawks in the GOP. Its instructions call for the Senate Finance Committee to report a tax bill by Nov. 13. Still, the document outlines the Senate GOP’s political vision. It maintains spending at 2017 levels for the year, but would then cut nondefense spending in subsequent years, leading to a \$106 billion cut in 2027. It would also allow defense levels to continue rising at their current rates, reaching \$684 billion at the end of a decade. The resolution also proposes \$473 billion in cuts to Medicare’s baseline spending over a decade and about \$1 trillion from Medicaid, though those provisions are not enforceable without additional legislation.” The vote was on passage. The Senate agreed to the budget by a vote of 51 to 49. The House later passed the budget resolution. [Senate Vote 245, [10/19/17](#); The Hill, [10/19/17](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 71](#)]

**2017: Cotton Voted For \$473 Billion In Medicare Cuts.** In October 2017, Cotton voted against an amendment that would have eliminated the \$473 billion in Medicare cuts found in the underlying budget resolution. According to a floor speech by Sen. Nelson (D-FL), “Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, before Medicare, one-half of senior citizens in this country did not have any healthcare, health insurance. Medicare changed that. So why in the world would we want to cut \$473 billion from Medicare? It does not make sense. My amendment simply restores that cut and replaces it with eliminating a number of tax loopholes. It is a simple amendment. Save Medicare.” The underlying legislation was the FY 2018 Senate budget resolution that set up reconciliation instructions for tax reform. The vote was on the amendment. The Senate rejected the amendment by a vote of 47 to 51. [Senate Vote 222, [10/18/17](#); Congressional Record, [10/18/17](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Amdt. 1150](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Amdt. 1116](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 71](#)]

## **2017: Cotton Effectively Voted For The GOP FY 2018 Budget Resolution, Which Started The Process Towards Tax Reform And Called For Cutting Medicare By \$473 Billion**

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## **2015: COTTON VOTED FOR THE FY 2016 CONFERENCE REPORT BUDGET RESOLUTION, WHICH WOULD HAVE CUT MEDICARE FUNDING**

**2015: Cotton Voted For The FY 2016 Conference Report Budget Resolution.** In May 2015, Cotton voted for the FY 2016 conference report budget resolution, which, according to the Congressional Quarterly, “would set broad spending and revenue targets over the next 10 years. [...] The budget resolution reflects the current post-sequester caps on discretionary spending - \$523 billion for defense and \$493.5 billion for non-defense programs in fiscal 2016. Raising the caps would require a change in law.” The vote was on the Conference Report; the Conference Report, which also passed the House, was passed by a vote of 51 to 48. [Senate Vote 171, [5/5/15](#); Congressional Quarterly, [3/27/15](#); Congressional Quarterly, [5/5/15](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Con. Res. 11](#)]

- **The Budget Would Have Cut \$4.2 Trillion “In [...] Benefit Programs Like Medicare, Medicaid And Food Stamps Over 10 Years.”** According to the New York Times, “the budget calls for \$4.2 trillion in cuts to benefit programs like Medicare, Medicaid and food stamps over 10 years. Domestic programs at Congress’s annual discretion would be cut by \$496 billion below the already tight limits imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011.” [New York Times, [5/5/15](#)]

## **2014: COTTON VOTED FOR THE FY 2015 RYAN BUDGET, WHICH WOULD HAVE CUT SPENDING ON DOMESTIC PROGRAMS, INCLUDING MEDICARE AND MEDICAID, BY \$5.1 TRILLION**

**2014: Cotton Voted For The FY 2015 Ryan Budget, Which Would Have Cut Spending On Domestic Programs, Including Medicare And Medicaid, By \$5.1 Trillion.** In April 2014, Cotton voted for Paul Ryan’s fiscal year 2015 budget plan. According to Congressional Quarterly, “The measure calls for a balanced budget by FY 2024, almost entirely by reducing spending \$5.1 trillion over the next 10 years — including by repealing the 2010 health care law; reducing spending on Medicare, Medicaid and other health programs; and changing other mandatory programs, such as food stamps.” The House adopted the budget resolution by a vote of 219 to 205, but the Senate did not. [House Vote 177, [4/10/14](#); Congressional Quarterly, [4/7/14](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 96](#)]

## **2013: COTTON EFFECTIVELY VOTED TO REDUCE FUNDING FOR MEDICARE AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

**2013: Cotton Effectively Voted To Reduce Funding For Medicare And Social Security.** In February 2013, according to Congressional Quarterly, Cotton voted against the “motion to recommit the bill to the House Budget Committee and report it back immediately with an amendment that would replace the bill’s finding section with language stating that Congress should pass legislation to replace the automatic spending cuts under the sequester scheduled to take effect in March 2013 without increasing taxes on middle-income Americans, decreasing long-term spending and maintaining Medicare and Social Security.” The vote was on the motion to recommit. The House rejected the motion by a vote of 194 to 229. [House Vote 37, [2/6/13](#); Congressional Quarterly, [2/6/13](#); Congressional Actions, [H.R. 444](#)]

## **Cotton Supported Privatizing Social Security And Medicare**

## **2015: COTTON EFFECTIVELY VOTED AGAINST MAKING IT HARDER TO PRIVATIZE SOCIAL SECURITY**

**2015: Cotton Effectively Voted Against Making It Harder To Privatize Social Security Or Reduce Benefits By Requiring 60 Votes In The Senate.** In March 2015, Cotton effectively voted against an amendment to the Senate’s FY 2016 budget resolution that, according to Congressional Quarterly, “would [have] create[d] a 60-vote point of order against any legislation that would reduce Social Security benefits, increase the retirement age for benefits or privatize Social Security.” The vote was on a motion to waive a budget point of order, which required 60 votes to succeed. The Senate rejected the motion by a vote of 51 to 48. The presiding officer subsequently sustained the budget point of order, killing the amendment. [Senate

Vote 84, [3/24/15](#); Congressional Quarterly, [3/24/15](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Amdt. 471](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Con. Res. 11](#)]

**2015: Cotton Effectively Voted Against Making It Harder To Privatize Medicare, Turn It Into A Paul Ryan-Style “Premium Support” Program Or Reduce Benefits, By Requiring 60 Votes In The Senate.** In March 2015, Cotton effectively voted against an amendment to the Senate’s FY 2016 budget resolution that, according to Politico, would have “make it tougher to turn Medicare into something resembling Ryan’s so-called ‘premium support’ plan.” According to Congressional Quarterly, “The Bennet amendment would [have] create[d] a 60-vote point of order against any legislation that would privatize Medicare, reduce guaranteed benefits, increase out of pocket expenses or turn the program into a premium-supported plan.” The vote was on a motion to waive a budget point of order against the proposed amendment. The Senate rejected the motion by a vote of 46 to 53. Afterwards, the presiding officer sustained the point of order, killing the amendment. [Senate Vote 90, [3/25/15](#); Politico, [4/4/15](#); Congressional Quarterly, [4/25/15](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Amdt. 601](#); Congressional Actions, [S. Con. Res. 11](#)]

## **2014: COTTON EFFECTIVELY VOTED AGAINST PROHIBITING A BILL THAT ESTABLISHED A MEDICARE VOUCHER PROGRAM**

**2014: Cotton Effectively Voted Against Prohibiting A Bill That Replaced The Medicare Physician Reimbursement Rate Formula With A New Payment System From Establishing A Medicare Voucher Program.** In March 2014, according to Congressional Quarterly, Cotton voted against the “motion to recommit the bill to the House Ways and Means Committee and report it back immediately with an amendment that would prohibit the bill from reducing Medicare benefits, eliminating guaranteed health insurance benefits under the program to seniors and individuals with disabilities, or from creating a Medicare voucher plan that would provide limited payments to Medicare beneficiaries in order to purchase private health plans.” The motion was rejected by a vote of 191 to 226. [House Vote 134, [3/14/14](#); Congressional Quarterly, [3/14/14](#); Congressional Actions, [H.R. 4015](#)]

## **2013: COTTON VOTED FOR REPLACING MEDICARE WITH A PREMIUM SUPPORT PLAN AS PART OF THE FY 2014 RYAN BUDGET**

**2013: Cotton Voted For Replacing Medicare With A Premium Support Plan As Part Of The FY 2014 Ryan Budget.** In March 2013, Cotton voted for replacing Medicare with a premium support plan, as part of House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan’s (R-WI) proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2014 to 2023 According to the House Budget Committee, “Beginning in 2024, for those workers born in 1959 or later, Medicare would offer them a choice of private plans competing alongside the traditional fee-for-service option on a new Medicare Exchange. Medicare would provide a premium-support payment either to pay for or to offset the premium of the plan chosen by the senior.” The resolution passed the House by a vote of 221 to 207, but died in the Senate. [House Vote 88, [3/21/13](#); House Budget Committee, 3/12/13; Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 25](#)]

## **2013: COTTON EFFECTIVELY VOTED AGAINST PROHIBITING THE USE OF FUNDS TO ESTABLISH A MEDICARE VOUCHER SYSTEM**

**2013: Cotton Effectively Voted Against Prohibiting The Use Of Funds To Establish A Medicare Voucher System.** In September 2013, according to Congressional Quarterly, Cotton voted against the “motion to recommit the joint resolution to the House Appropriations Committee and report it back immediately with an amendment that would [...] bar the use of funds provided by the bill [...] to establish a Medicare voucher plan that provides limited payments to purchase health care in the private sector.” The vote was on the motion to recommit. The House rejected the motion by a vote of 190 to 228. [House Vote 477, [9/20/13](#); Congressional Quarterly, [9/20/13](#); Congressional Actions, [H.J. Res. 59](#)]

## **2011: COTTON SUPPORTED RYAN’S FY 2012 BUDGET, WHICH WOULD HAVE TURNED MEDICARE INTO A PREMIUM SUPPORT PLAN**

## **2011: Cotton Supported Ryan's FY 2012 Budget**

**2011: Cotton Supported Ryan's FY 2012 Budget.** According to National Review, "Nonetheless, [Cotton] supports Rep. Paul Ryan's 'Path to Prosperity' plan and a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution." [National Review, 10/7/11, via CottonforCongress.com, accessed 11/14/13]

*Wall Street Journal: Ryan's Budget Would "Essentially End Medicare" And Turn The Program Into A Premium Support Plan*

**Wall Street Journal: Ryan's Budget Would "Essentially End Medicare."** According to the Wall Street Journal, "The plan would essentially end Medicare, which now pays most of the health-care bills for 48 million elderly and disabled Americans, as a program that directly pays those bills. Mr. Ryan and other conservatives say this is necessary because of the program's soaring costs. Medicare cost \$396.5 billion in 2010 and is projected to rise to \$502.8 billion in 2016. At that pace, spending on the program would have doubled between 2002 and 2016." [Wall Street Journal, 4/4/11]

**Ryan's Budget Would Have Converted Medicare Into A "Premium Support" System.** According to the Wall Street Journal, "Mr. Ryan's proposal would apply to those currently under the age of 55, and for those Americans would convert Medicare into a 'premium support' system. Participants from that group would choose from an array of private insurance plans when they reach 65 and become eligible, and the government would pay about the first \$15,000 in premiums. Those who are poorer or less healthy would receive bigger payments than others." [Wall Street Journal, 4/4/11]

## **Cotton Opposed Social Security Disability Insurance**

### **2015: COTTON PROPOSED A REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFICIARIES**

**2015: Cotton Proposed A Reduction In The Number Of Social Security Disability Beneficiaries.** According to Little Rock Public Radio KUAR, "An Arkansas U.S. Senator primarily known for foreign policy is proposing changes to Social Security's disability program. Sen. Tom Cotton detailed new legislation Monday at a forum held by the conservative think tank Heritage Foundation intended to reduce the number of disability beneficiaries." [Little Rock Public Radio KUAR, 11/9/15]

**KUAR HEADLINE: Cotton Proposed Adding More Classifications To Social Security Disability Insurance "To Cover A Spectrum Of Disability."** According to Little Rock Public Radio KUAR, "Cotton has yet to introduce the legislation in the Senate but he outlined a three pronged approach. First, adding more classifications to cover a spectrum of disability. 'Social Security will distinguish between those who are genuinely and permanently disabled and those are disabled but expected to recover,' he said, 'those who are expected to recover will be categorized as likely or potential to recover.'" [Little Rock Public Radio KUAR, 11/9/15]

### **Cotton Proposed Integrating Work Requirements Into The Social Security Disability Program**

**Cotton Proposed Integrating Work Requirements Into The Social Security Disability Program.** According to Little Rock Public Radio KUAR, "Second, Cotton outlined integrating some level of work. 'It will allow beneficiaries in these categories to earn an income while on the program through a benefit offset. These beneficiaries can take time for rehabilitation and gradually rejoin the workforce. With the offset they won't be at risk of losing their benefits as they begin to earn more money on the path back to full time work,' he said." [Little Rock Public Radio KUAR, 11/9/15]

### **2013: COTTON CO-SPONSORED A BILL TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE**

**2013: Cotton Co-Sponsored Bill That Would Change Social Security Disability Benefits, Including Eliminating Consideration Of Combined Impairments.** According to a CRS Summary, "Disability Insurance Protection and Fraud Prevention Act of 2014 – [...] Prohibits the Commissioner of Social Security, in determining whether an individual is under a disability for insurance benefit payment purposes, from considering: (1) an individual as approaching advanced age unless he

or she has attained age 58; (2) an individual as having attained advanced age unless he or she has attained age 61; and (3) the individual's inability to communicate in English as a vocational factor. Amends titles II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) and XVI (Supplemental Security Income) (SSI) of the Social Security Act (SSA) to eliminate consideration of the combined effect of impairments in disability determinations. [...] (3) a demonstration program that encourages employers to reduce the incidence of disability among their employees by 20% through a voluntary program that provides the employers with a tax credit if their employees do not file for Social Security disability insurance.”\_According to a cosponsorship list for H.R. 4111, Rep. Tom Cotton cosponsored the bill on March 25, 2014. [CRS Summary, H.R.4111, [2/27/14](#); H.R.4111 Co-sponsorship List, accessed [5/28/24](#)]

### **The Act Would Have Raised Disability Eligibility Because Of Advanced Age To 61**

**The Legislation Would Have Raised Advanced Age Disability Coverage To 61.** According to a CRS Summary, “Disability Insurance Protection and Fraud Prevention Act of 2014 [...] Prohibits the Commissioner of Social Security, in determining whether an individual is under a disability for insurance benefit payment purposes, from considering: [...] (2) an individual as having attained advanced age unless he or she has attained age 61.” [CRS Summary, HR4111, [2/27/14](#)]

#### *The Current Eligibility Age Was 55 Or Older*

**The Current Social Security Policy Categorized Advanced Age As 55 Or Older.** According to the Social Security Administration, “404.1563. Your age as a vocational factor. [...] (e) Person of advanced age. We consider that at advanced age (age 55 or older), age significantly affects a person’s ability to adjust to other work. We have special rules for persons of advanced age and for persons in this category who are closely approaching retirement age (age 60 or older).” [Social Security Administration, accessed [5/28/24](#)]

## **2013: Cotton Voted For Means Testing Medicare**

### **2013: COTTON VOTED FOR MEANS TESTING MEDICARE**

**2013: Cotton Voted For Means Testing Medicare.** In March 2013, Cotton voted to support means testing Medicare, as part the Republican Study Committee’s proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2014 to 2023 According to the Republican Study Committee, “Under the RSC’s proposal, wealthier seniors would be required to pay slightly more in annual premiums than those with fewer financial resources, and conversely, poorer seniors would receive higher health insurance subsidies..” The vote was on an amendment to the House budget resolution replacing the entire budget with the RSC’s proposed budget; the amendment failed by a vote of 104 to 132 with 171 Democrats voting present. According to Congressional Quarterly, “Repeating a strategy from last year, 171 Democrats voted “present” to push Republicans to vote against the RSC plan to make sure it did not have enough support to replace the Ryan plan.” [House Vote 86, [3/21/13](#); Republican Study Committee, [3/18/13](#); House Budget Committee, [3/13](#); Congressional Quarterly, [3/25/13](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Amdt. 35](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 25](#)]

**2013: Cotton Voted For Means Testing Medicare As Part Of The FY 2014 Ryan Budget.** In March 2013, Cotton voted for means testing Medicare, as part of House Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan’s (R-WI) proposed budget resolution covering fiscal years 2014 to 2023 According to the House Budget Committee, “his budget also advances a bipartisan proposal to further means-test premiums in Medicare Parts B and D for high-income seniors, similar to the President’s proposal in his fiscal year 2013 budget.” The resolution passed the House by a vote of 221 to 207, but died in the Senate. [House Vote 88, [3/21/13](#); House Budget Committee, [3/13](#); Congressional Actions, [H. Con. Res. 25](#)]