



# MONDAY ALERT

New York State Alliance *for* Retired Americans

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## State of the Union and Elon Musk Myths vs. Facts on Social Security

In the State of the Union address the President made many misstatements including that the United States had given \$350 billion in aid to Ukraine. According to the US News and World Report the actual amount has given about \$128 billion, less than half of what the President claims and this aid has resulted in the support of thousands of American jobs.

But, perhaps his most egregious errors revolved around Social Security. President Trump claimed there were more than 10 million people listed on the Social Security database above the age of 100, including one who is recorded as being between 360 and 369 years of age collecting social security. The fact is the U.S. has roughly 100,000 centenarians not millions, according to the Pew Research Center. The fact is The Social Security Administration (SSA) stops paying Social Security benefits to people over 115 years old.

### Explanation

- The SSA regularly checks that its oldest beneficiaries are using their Medicare benefits.
- If a beneficiary is not using their Medicare benefits, the SSA verifies that they are still alive.

- In rare cases, the SSA stops paying benefits to people over 100 years old.

Elon Musk in a February 28 episode of the Joe Rogan Experience podcast spewed tons of disinformation about Social Security to try to convince the American public that they can't count on the benefits they have earned.

None of what he said was new and even less was true.

The American people know better. They understand how Social Security works and how it's made a difference in their family's lives for generations. **This is why Social Security is one of the most popular government programs and this is why Trump and Musk are trying to indicate widespread fraud and waste and the program is a "Ponzi scheme" so they can cut and/or privatize Social Security.**

Over and over, Americans have said they want to protect Social Security for the future by making the richest Americans, like Elon Musk, pay their fair share into Social Security. Currently the maximum cap for earnings to pay into Social Security is \$176,100. After that there is NO payment into the program and that is ONLY payroll money NOT investment income. **It takes the average Millionaire until March 6 to pay into the system and after that date they pay NOTHING into Social Security. Billionaires, like Elon Musk reach the taxable income limit by January 1 at noon.**

But just in case Elon actually believes Senator Mike Lee's Ponzi propaganda, we need to correct the record:

**Musk:** Social Security is the "Biggest Ponzi Scheme of All Time."

**Reality:** Social Security is a social **insurance** program. Workers and employers pay in, money goes to the Social Security Trust Fund and is paid out when due. Social Security has a Board of Trustees and professional

actuaries who report annually on the health of the Trust Fund.

It's solvent and the benefits are guaranteed (unlike the stock market or a private equity fund). In 89 years, Social Security has never missed a payment.

**Musk:** People pay in and the money “goes out immediately.”

**Reality:** There is a Social Security Trust Fund with nearly [\\$3 trillion](#) to pay future benefits.

**Musk:** The obligation for Social Security is your entire retirement “career.”

**Reality:** Musk is right about this one - and it's one of the best parts of Social Security.

Social Security benefits are guaranteed for life and backed by the full faith and credit of the United States. The benefits are modest; Americans can count on them, and they won't go up or down like the stock market.

**Musk:** Future Social Security obligations "far exceed" tax revenue.

**Reality:** The current Social Security Trustees [Report](#) states that there is a 3.5% revenue shortfall over the next 75 years equivalent to 1.5% of GDP. This is not the Chicken Little “far exceed” standard. The simple and fair solution is to increase revenues over time by making rich people like Elon Musk pay their fair share into the system.

**Musk:** People are living "way longer than expected"

**Reality:** In fact, sadly there is a growing inequality of [life expectancy](#) in the United States. While the richest Americans are living longer, it's not the case for many people who earn modest wages, have inadequate access to

health care, or have high-risk jobs for example. This state of affairs is a national embarrassment.

## **We Need You**

Over the time between the Presidential Inauguration and now NYSARA has asked its members participate in "good trouble" activities that put pressure on Congress to reverse their legislation that hurts Seniors and to reverse the actions of Doge and the administration. We've asked you to call, write and visit your elected representatives and to participate in rallies protesting the Congressional budget that cuts \$880 billion dollars from Medicaid. Medicaid supports 63% of seniors in long term care, keeps rural hospitals operating and supplements insurance to support severely disabled children.

If you have not been able to participate in these actions there is another activist method to make a difference.

We know that the best way to protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid is by making these issues personal. Lawmakers and the public need to hear directly from retirees about what these programs mean to them and what's at stake if they are cut.

To help collect these important stories, our national organization, the ARA is launching a new program.

The ARA is looking for firsthand accounts of how retirees rely on these programs and what would happen if benefits were cut. Stories should focus on:

- **Social Security** – How it helps pay for needs like food, housing, and medication, and what their retirement would look like without it.

- **Medicare** – The impact of lower drug prices from the Inflation Reduction Act, struggles with Medicare Advantage plans denying care, or concerns about privatization.
- **Medicaid** – How it helps with long-term care, home care, or nursing home costs for retirees or their loved ones.

How It Works

1. Members should submit their stories through our form: [retiredamericans.org/stories](https://retiredamericans.org/stories).
2. Stories should include key details: **who they are, their work history, how they rely on these programs, and how cuts would affect them.**

Please spread the word and encourage your friends and fellow union members to share their stories. If you have any questions, reach out to NYSARA President Barry at [president@newyorkstateara.org](mailto:president@newyorkstateara.org) or NYSARA Executive Director Stephen at [stephen.madarasz@gmail.com](mailto:stephen.madarasz@gmail.com) .

## Did You Know.....

The NYS Office for the aging is the largest nutrition program in the country serving almost 21, million meals to 250,000 people, if you were a family member or one of these people that receive these meals or any other services from your offices for the aging please reach out to your Congress people to make sure that the older Americans act remains harmless in this budget debacle we have going on right now

## Medicaid Cuts Hurt Seniors



**CUTTING MEDICAID WILL**

**HURT SENIORS  
LONG-TERM CARE**

**AND BANKRUPT THEIR**

Congress is rushing to cut [\$880 billion] from Medicaid, which would mean 1 in 5 people on Medicare could have their health and long-term care taken away. A CUT TO MEDICAID IS A CUT TO MEDICARE.

Congress is rushing to cut [\$880 billion] from Medicaid. These cuts would have serious consequences for millions of [seniors/older adults] in nursing homes and long-term care.

Cutting Medicaid means cutting Medicare. You can't cut [\$880 billion] from Medicaid without cutting long-term care for [seniors/older adults] and putting essential health care out of reach for millions. We can't afford to abandon our [seniors/older adults] and bankrupt families in the process.

Medicaid is a lifeline for over 12 million people with Medicare. If Congress rushes to cut [\$880 billion] from Medicaid, they'll rip health coverage away from millions of [seniors/older adults], people with disabilities, and families who can least afford it.

Medicaid helps over 12 million people with Medicare afford the care they need. Rushing to cut [\$880 billion] from Medicaid will force millions of [seniors/older adults] to go without critical care and saddle their families with medical debt. Tell Congress: Stop cuts to Medicaid and protect our seniors.

## **House Democrats Introduce Legislation to Protect Social Security Benefits, Offices, and Workforce**

On Wednesday, House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Ranking Member **John Larson** (CT), Ways and Means Committee Ranking Member **Richard Neal** (MA), Rep. **Danny Davis** (IL), and Rep. **Steven Horsford** (NV) introduced three bills that aim to stop the Trump Administration's plans to gut Social Security. A livestream video of the event can be viewed [here](#).

The Keeping Our Field Offices Open Act would ban Social Security field office closures for the rest of President Trump's tenure, and the Protecting Americans' Social Security Data Act would block and challenge **Elon**

**Musk** and the so-called Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) access to Americans' sensitive Social Security data. Other proposed legislation would require President Trump to provide information regarding DOGE's plans for SSA, including proposals to cut staff and/or close field offices.

Several other lawmakers, retirement security allies, and labor allies delivered remarks, including AFGE President **Everett Kelley**, Former SSA Commissioner **Martin O'Malley**, Rep. **Linda Sanchez** (CA), and Rep. **Gwen Moore** (WI). Alliance President **Robert Roach Jr.** endorsed the legislation and spoke about what the chaos and Musk's disinformation campaign is doing to seniors and their families.



Alliance President Robert Roach, Jr. (center) delivers remarks with Rep. Larson (right) and Nancy Altman, President of Social Security Works (left)

"We have stood with Congressman Larson in the past, we stand with him today, and we support this legislation 100 percent. But you must remember through all the rhetoric, through all the talk about \$2 trillion cuts that there is an emotional toll. We need more people at Social Security answering the phones, and we don't need people going through all our records and making up stories," said President **Roach**. "And we must let the American



people know that we are fighting not just to protect their Social Security but to enhance it. We must let them know that we're fighting for something.”

## **President Trump Doubles Down on Social Security Lies During Address to Congress**

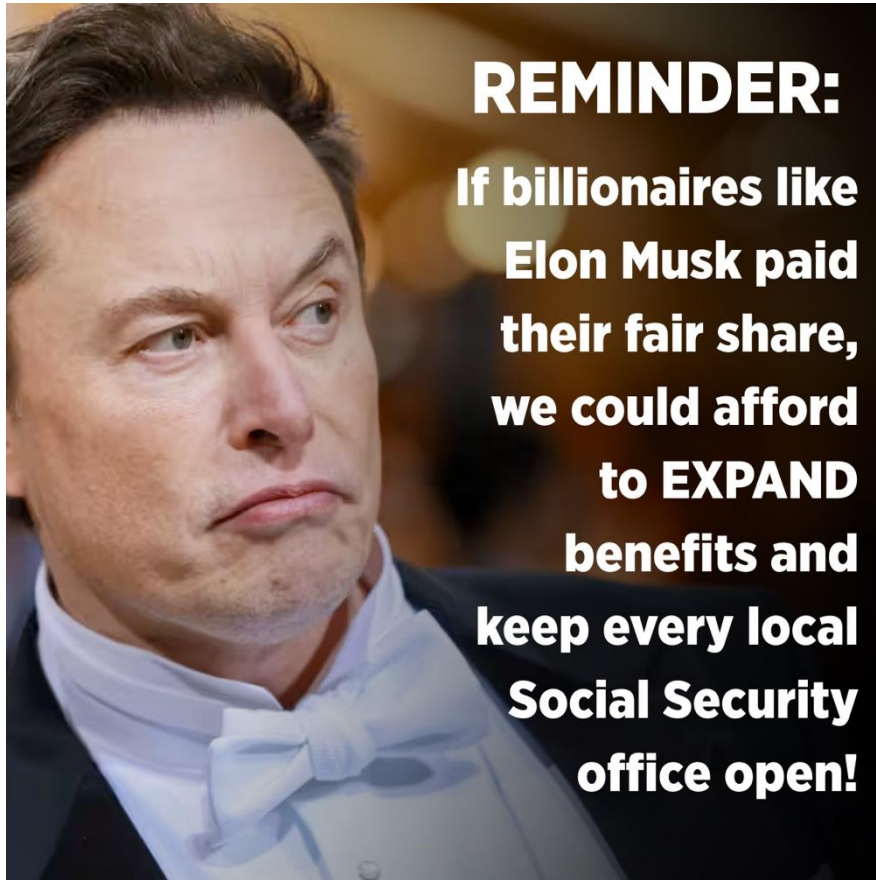
On Tuesday, President **Donald Trump** [delivered remarks](#) to a joint session of Congress. He spent several minutes [repeating lies Elon Musk](#) has spread about Social Security. Trump specifically said there were “shocking levels of incompetence and probable fraud” in Social Security falsely claiming that dead people over the age of 150 are receiving benefits.

**Musk** [made the same claim](#) during an appearance on the *Joe Rogan Experience* on Feb. 28 and said Social Security was the “biggest Ponzi Scheme of all time.” The Alliance debunked and responded to Musk’s disinformation [in a statement](#) issued on Saturday.

“These lies are dangerous. The biggest threat to Social Security right now is the Trump Administration. The president has broken his promise not to touch Social Security. He has cheered on Elon Musk’s DOGE team as they slash thousands of SSA jobs and shut down Social Security offices nationwide,” said **Richard Fiesta**, Executive Director of the Alliance. “This isn’t about efficiency or fraud prevention—it’s about making it harder for seniors and people with disabilities to access the benefits they’ve earned. These cuts force Americans to endure longer wait times and travel greater distances just to receive the benefits they depend on.”

## **Millionaires Are Done Paying Into Social Security This Year**

Yesterday, people who earn one million dollars a year [stopped](#) contributing to Social Security for 2025. That is because Social Security payroll taxes are only paid on the first \$176,100 of a person’s income.



Public data shows that billionaire **Elon Musk** [paid](#) all of his required Social Security contributions within the first 15 minutes of 2025. Most Americans will continue [paying into the system](#) for the rest of the year.

If the wealthiest Americans had to pay their fair share in Social Security taxes, it would bring in more than \$300 billion in extra revenue. This would also allow for the increase of benefits for retirees and extend the solvency of the Social Security Trust fund for 75 years.

Several lawmakers have proposed legislation that would increase the cap on earnings subject to Social Security taxes, including the Social Security Expansion Act (H.R. 1700/S. 770), sponsored by Sens. **Bernie Sanders** (VT) and **Elizabeth Warren** (MA) and Reps. **Val Hoyle** (OR) and **Jan**

**Schakowsky** (IL). Rep. **John Larson** (CT) is expected to introduce the Social Security 2100 Act soon.

“Billionaires and millionaires should not be able to dodge paying their fair share into the system while average Americans pay Social Security taxes year-round,” said **Joseph Peters, Jr.**, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alliance. “Scrapping the cap would ensure that Social Security remains strong for decades to come and allow us to finally increase benefits for retirees.”

### ***KFF Health News: Trump Vowed To End Surprise Medical Bills. The Office Working on That Just Got Slashed.***

**By Noam N. Levey**

As President Donald Trump wrapped up his first term in 2020, he signed legislation to protect Americans from surprise medical bills. “This must end,” Trump said. “We’re going to hold insurance companies and hospitals totally accountable.”

But the president’s wide-ranging push to slash government spending, led by billionaire Elon Musk, is weakening the federal office charged with implementing the No Surprises Act.

Some 15% of those working at the federal Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight, or CCIIO, were fired two weeks ago, according to the agency’s former deputy director in charge of operations, Jeff Grant.

And while the full impact of the cutbacks is still coming into focus, the retrenchment is threatening work at an agency already laboring to run an overstretched system for resolving sometimes very large bills from out-of-network medical providers.

