



## Talking Points

### Beginning the Visit:

- If you are a large group, the person selected to open the meeting should identify herself or himself and ask the staff to identify themselves and their areas of responsibility. Comments should be directed to the Representative or Senator, if present. Wherever appropriate, those attending should tell personal stories that relate to Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and long term care.
- Explain that you are there to talk about the Super Committee and the need to protect Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.
- Explain the background of the Alliance, how you are a member and ask them to visit the Alliance's website at [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org) for more information about the Alliance.

### What to Tell the Special Committee & Congress:



#### **Hands off Social Security!**

- Social Security does not contribute a penny to the federal deficit.
- Social Security's long-term funding shortfall is decades away and should be addressed separately from the Super Committee's negotiations.
- We oppose changing to the chained CPI to calculate Social Security's cost-of living adjustments! The chained CPI would mean an immediate benefit cut for today's retirees!
- We oppose raising the retirement age! It's already rising to 67 for the next generation of retirees. Pushing it even higher puts retirement out of reach for the middle class and our children and grandchildren.
- Raising the payroll tax cap! If the cap on the payroll tax contributions paid by workers and employers were eliminated so that all wages above \$106,800 were taxed, Social Security's long-term funding gap would be totally eliminated!
- We oppose means-testing Social Security. Means-testing benefits would undermine the insurance nature of the program: Recipients have an earned right to their retirement benefits. Breaking this link between earnings and benefits would undermine the very support the program needs for its continued success.



## **Protect Medicare! No Cuts! Any Medicare Savings Should Be Used for Medicare – Not to Reduce the Deficit!**

- We oppose raising the age of Medicare eligibility from 65 to 67! These individuals are the most difficult to insure, as a result of their age and chronic conditions.
- We oppose proposals that shift costs on to seniors! We oppose using a single deductible for Medicare, restricting first dollar coverage under Medigap or requiring co-pays for home health. These things will do nothing to reduce the cost for health care for seniors and will shift costs on to those who can least afford it.
- Any savings that are found in Medicare should be put back into the Medicare!
- Hands off our Medicare! Do NOT privatize Medicare! The so-called stipend will not be enough to cover health care costs and will leave seniors at the mercy of insurance companies.



## **Congress should not balance the budget on the backs of Medicaid beneficiaries!**

- We oppose cuts to Medicaid, a program that assist seniors and low-income population. Especially when there are tax cuts still being given to the wealthy!
- The Committee and Congress should not support proposals that would reduce funding to Medicaid by changing its formula either through block granting or a blended rate. Such proposals would merely shift costs on to the state, and ultimately affect the benefits of Medicaid beneficiaries, including seniors who rely on the program for nursing home care.



## **Congress Should Reject a Balanced Budget Amendment**

- A balanced budget amendment would revert spending back to the 1960s level and is unrealistic today.
- Capping spending at 18% of the gross domestic product (GDP), as the BBA requires, would entail severe cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

### **Ending the Visit:**

Thank them for their time and drop off your materials.