

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 4, 2026

Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
521 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Thune:

With the Finance Committee preparing to discuss options to address the pending insolvency of Social Security, it is critical that the American people understand where Republicans truly stand regarding our pre-eminent economic security program. For decades, Republicans have attacked and undercut Social Security, aiming to cut benefits or privatize the program.¹ Earlier this summer, Speaker Johnson publicly stated that Republicans have a “plan” to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid if they retain control of Congress next year.² This is merely the latest in a months-long assault on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid,³ and Americans deserve to have full transparency into Republican plans to attack earned benefits like Social Security.

The existence of a plan to cut the nation’s social safety net follows Republicans’ deep cuts to and attempts to impair the administration of these critical programs,⁴ which provide retirement benefits and health insurance to tens of millions of seniors, children, and low-income and disabled Americans.

Since President Trump took office, Republicans have already:

- Passed legislation that will rip away health insurance from about 15 million Americans;⁵

¹ Republican Study Committee, “Fiscal Sanity to Save America: Republican Study Committee FY 2025 Budget Proposal,” March 20, 2024, p. 108, https://hern.house.gov/uploadedfiles/final_budget_including_letter_web_version.pdf; Newsweek, “Social Security: Full List of Republicans Who Voted for Major Change,” Rachel Dobkin, December 21, 2024, <https://www.newsweek.com/social-security-fairness-act-amendment-rand-paul-2004598>; Axios, “Ted Cruz: Trump accounts are personal Social Security accounts,” Emily Peck, May 8, 2026, <https://www.axios.com/2026/05/08/cruz-trump-accounts-social-security>.

² Team Punchbowl News, “Johnson says he has plan to fix entitlement spending,” June 8, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHNOv09VeDs&t=1s>.

³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Trump Administration Personnel Policies Harming Social Security Customer Service, Risk Lasting Damage,” Kathleen Romig and Devin O’Connor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/trump-administration-personnel-policies-harming-social-security-customer>; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “By the Numbers: Harmful Republican Megabill Will Take Health Coverage Away From Millions of People and Raise Families’ Costs,” updated August 27, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/by-the-numbers-harmful-republican-megabill-will-take-health-coverage-away-from>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

- Cut nearly \$187 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),⁶ forcing an estimated 2.4 million individuals to lose food assistance in an average month;⁷
- Threatened to revive Bush-era efforts to privatize Social Security;⁸ and
- Made it harder for Social Security beneficiaries to access their benefits due to long wait times, staffing shortages, and degraded customer service capabilities;⁹

President Trump claimed Republicans would protect Social Security,¹⁰ but the record of the past eighteen months tells a different story: the deepest staffing cuts the Social Security Administration has ever seen, administration officials openly discuss privatization and a higher retirement age,¹¹ and, now, a newly announced “plan” the Speaker of the House refuses to show the public. And that is on top of passing the largest Medicaid and SNAP cuts in American history.¹²

The 2026 Social Security Trustees Report, the first to account for Trump's second-term agenda, moved the projected insolvency date for the retirement fund (OASI) up to the fourth quarter of 2032, while over the long-term, Social Security’s deficit widened to roughly \$30 trillion, the largest shortfall in nearly half a century, with nearly half this reduction driven by Trump administration policies.¹³

In early June, Speaker Johnson claimed that there is a Republican “plan” to cut the nation’s entitlement programs. In an interview Monday, the Speaker blamed these programs for the national debt, saying, “The reason we’re in trouble is because over 74% of federal spending is on autopilot, mandatory spending. That’s your entitlement programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and things like Social Security. They have to be adjusted and fixed. We have a plan to do that next year.”¹⁴

⁶ Urban Institute, “SNAP Cuts in One Big Beautiful Bill Act Leave Almost 3 Million Young Adults Vulnerable to Losing Nutrition Assistance,” Amelia Coffey and Heather Hahn, August 6, 2025, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/snap-cuts-one-big-beautiful-bill-act-leave-almost-3-million-young-adults-vulnerable>.

⁷ Congressional Budget Office, “Estimated Effects of Public Law 119-21 on Participation and Benefits Under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,” August 11, 2025, <https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2025-08/61367-SNAP.pdf>.

⁸ Axios, “Ted Cruz: Trump accounts are personal Social Security accounts,” Emily Peck, May 8, 2026, <https://www.axios.com/2026/05/08/cruz-trump-accounts-social-security>.

⁹ The New Yorker, “The Real Cost of Downsizing Social Security,” May 7, 2026, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/deep-state-diaries/the-real-cost-of-downsizing-social-security>; Letter from Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, et al., to Commissioner Frank Bisignano, March 15, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_warren_senators_to_social_security_admin_on_new_staff_reassignments.pdf.

¹⁰ The White House, “President Trump Delivers on Social Security Promise: Stronger, Faster, and More Secure for All Americans,” press release, August 14, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/releases/2025/08/president-trump-delivers-on-social-security-promise-stronger-faster-and-more-secure-for-all-americans>.

¹¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Trump Administration Personnel Policies Harming Social Security Customer Service, Risk Lasting Damage,” Kathleen Romig and Devin O’Connor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/trump-administration-personnel-policies-harming-social-security-customer>; The Hill, “Social Security chief walks back remark on raising retirement age,” Ashleigh Fields, September 19, 2025, <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/5513369-social-security-retirement-age>.

¹² Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “By the Numbers: Harmful Republican Megabill Will Take Health Coverage Away From Millions of People and Raise Families’ Costs,” updated August 27, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/by-the-numbers-harmful-republican-megabill-will-take-health-coverage-away-from>.

¹³ Social Security Administration, 2026 OASDI Trustees Report Summary, <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/trsum/>, (Table 9 and “Changes Reflected in the 2026 Reports”); figures corroborated by the Bipartisan Policy Center and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/explainer/2026-social-security-trustees-report-explained/>.

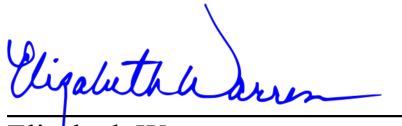
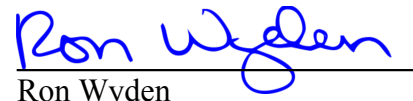
Johnson's defense — that he is targeting only “waste, fraud, and abuse” — is nothing more than a smoke-and-mirrors scheme to cover up benefit cuts.¹⁵ A plan you will not show the voters before they vote is not reassurance. It is a warning and revealing of Republican priorities.

President Trump’s tax bill gave over \$1 trillion in tax breaks to the top one percent of earners over the next ten years.¹⁶ And his war in Iran is estimated to cost tens of billions in taxpayer dollars.¹⁷ But now Speaker Johnson is blaming programs that keep seniors, low-income families, and people with disabilities out of poverty as the “reason” for the current national debt. The Speaker’s claim that seniors’ health care and retirement benefits need to be “adjusted” while millionaires and billionaires received massive tax breaks is not just wrong — it is unacceptable.¹⁸

Democrats have already put forward plans to rein in the cost of health care and to protect and strengthen Social Security, all without cutting benefits or ripping people away from their health care. It is time for Republicans to put their money where their mouth is and put forward their plan.

We call on each of you to release the plan referenced by Speaker Johnson.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator
Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance

¹⁴ Team Punchbowl News, “Johnson says he has plan to fix entitlement spending,” June 8, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHNQv09VeDs&t=1s>; Post on X by Max Cohen, June 8, 2026, <https://x.com/maxpcohen/status/2064100617493070137?s=20>.

¹⁵ MSN/Newsweek, “Mike Johnson defends Social Security remarks amid cut accusations.” <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/insight/mike-johnson-defends-social-security-remarks-amid-cut-accusations/gm-GM87383C80>.

¹⁶ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, “Top 1% to Receive \$1 Trillion Tax Cut from Trump Megabill Over the Next Decade,” Carl Davis, July 7, 2025, <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/insight/johnson-defends-social-security-stance-amid-benefit-cut-concerns/gm-GMF0401AFA?gemSnapshotKey=GMF0401AFA-snapshot-0&ocid=MD12>.

¹⁷ CBS News, “Iran War’s True Cost Closer to \$50 Billion, Not \$25 Billion, U.S. Officials Say,” Eleanor Watson, Olivia Gazis, and Kathryn Watson, April 30, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-war-cost-closer-50-billion-us-officials/?ftag=CNM-00-10aab7e&linkId=935049208>; see also Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Jeffrey Merkley, Chuck Schumer, et al., to Director Phillip Swagel, May 27, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_merkley_schumer_letter_to_cbo_re_cost_of_war_with_iran.pdf.

¹⁸ United States Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Billionaires Over Families: Cruel Trade-Offs in Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill,” November 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/obbba_tax_breaks_health_one-pager.pdf.



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator