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To: National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare Foundation
Social Security Works

From: Lake Research Partners

Re: Key Findings from November Omnibus

Date: November 17, 2011

- Americans across party lines strongly oppose changing the COLA formula in a way that curbs increases for beneficiaries now and in the future. In our November omnibus, 72 percent of Americans opposed changing the COLA formula, including 74 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of independents, and 70 percent of Republicans.
- Seniors are particularly opposed to changing the COLA as 79 percent of people over 65 oppose, including 73 percent who *strongly* oppose.
- Americans are more inclined to agree with a candidate who says that the proposed COLA change is actually a benefit cut than they are to the candidate who says it is a minor technical change that would extend the time Social Security can pay full benefits.
 - A 54 percent majority agreed with the candidate who says: *"Inflation is higher for seniors because they spend more of their money on health care costs which have been rising faster than other costs. This so-called minor technical change is really a cut in Social Security benefits that hurts people who depend on Social Security by making it harder for them to make ends meet."*
 - Only 37 percent agree with the candidate who says: *"This is a minor technical change that makes the cost of living adjustment more accurate, allowing benefits to continue to grow but just at a slower rate. The change would reduce the overall deficit, saving over 100 billion dollars in the next 10 years, and it would extend the time that Social Security can continue to pay full benefits."*
- Majorities of Democrats (60 percent) and Independents (55 percent) agree with the candidate who says the proposed change is actually benefit cut, as

do a plurality of Republicans (48 percent).

- Cutting the Social Security COLA has electoral consequences. After hearing argumentation, a 58 percent majority say they would be less likely to vote for their member of Congress if he or she votes to change the COLA in a way that reduces benefits, and just 14 percent would be more likely. Backlash to a vote on changing the COLA extends across party lines as 69 percent of Democrats, 56 percent of independents, and 52 percent of Republicans say they would be less likely to vote for their Member of Congress. Just 11 percent of Democrats, 15 percent of Republicans, and 17 percent of Independents say they are more likely to vote for their member of Congress.

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Lake Research Partners designed a survey that was administered by Caravan in an omnibus survey conducted by telephone using professional interviewers. The survey reached a randomly sampled total of 1,000 adults 18 years of age and older nationwide in the continental United States. The survey was conducted from November 10-13, 2011. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent. It is higher among subgroups.

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