

# NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO PRESERVE SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE

## 2008 Presidential Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

### **Social Security**

Social Security is our nation's most important and effective income security program. It is fully financed through 2041, and will be able to pay approximately seventy-five percent of expected benefits thereafter. Social Security faces both short-term and long-term financial challenges. In the near term, there will be increasing pressure to cut benefits as a means of reducing recurring federal deficits, even though Social Security does not contribute to the deficit. In the long term, the challenge will be to ensure that beneficiaries after 2041 receive their full, expected benefits.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Do you oppose diverting money from Social Security into individual investment accounts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How will your Administration address the challenges facing Social Security?

*Candidate Response:*

### **Medicare: Prescription Drug Benefit (Part D)**

The Medicare Modernization Act (MMA) established a prescription drug program administered by private companies and managed care organizations. MMA prohibits Medicare from offering a drug benefit directly and negotiating for the lowest prices possible for seniors.

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will your Administration support creating a Medicare-operated prescription drug benefit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you support lessening the financial hardship of the donut hole?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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What reforms of the Medicare prescription drug benefit, if any, will your Administration support?

*Candidate Response:*

## **Medicare: Privatization**

Medicare was originally designed to create a national insurance pool that would help make health insurance affordable for seniors. This goal has been eroded over time as Medicare has been increasingly privatized. The Medicare Modernization Act, in particular, not only created a privatized prescription drug benefit, it also included many long-term changes designed to privatize all of Medicare.

Will your Administration support eliminating unfair excess payments to private Medicare Advantage plans? **Yes**  
 **No**

What other changes to strengthen the social insurance nature of traditional fee-for-service Medicare will your Administration support?

*Candidate Response:*

## **Medicare: Finances**

The Medicare Trustees estimate that the Medicare Hospital Insurance Trust Fund (Part A) will be solvent until 2019, at which time payroll taxes will cover seventy-nine percent of the program's cost. According to the Congressional Budget Office, over the last thirty-five years, health care inflation has been the main factor driving Medicare's cost growth.

Do you concur in the assessment that the Medicare challenge reflects the overall state of health care in our nation and is not a problem confined to the Medicare program itself? **Yes**  
 **No**

Will your Administration support elimination of the 45% limit on general revenue contributions to Medicare enacted as part of the Medicare Modernization Act?

How will your Administration address Medicare's financial situation and the nation's health care cost crisis generally?

*Candidate Response:*

## **Federal Budget**

The overall health and well-being of both current and future generations are dependent upon today's fiscal policy decisions. Continued deficit spending will double our gross national debt from \$5.8 trillion in 2001 to a projected \$11.5 trillion in 2012, imperiling our global competitiveness and our obligations to all generations.

What steps will your Administration take to bring the federal budget into balance?

*Candidate Response:*

## **Medicaid and Long-Term Care**

Because of the high cost of long-term care and because most people do not have long-term care insurance, Medicaid provides a safety net for individuals requiring long-term care assistance. In 2005, Medicaid was the primary source of long-term care financing, providing forty-nine percent of national spending for nursing home care and home- and community-based long-term care. But Medicaid provides long-term care assistance only after life savings have been depleted to meet eligibility requirements. As the baby boom generation ages, the rising demand for long-term care will increase and will continue to strain families and the Medicaid program.

How will your Administration address our nation's long-term care problem?

*Candidate Response:*

## **Pensions**

Today's workers find it increasingly difficult to prepare adequately for their retirement years. About one-half of our nation's employees work for employers who do not offer any type of retirement plan. Employers who do offer plans increasingly are shifting from guaranteed defined-benefit plans to less stable defined-contribution plans, such as 401(k) plans, leaving employees' retirement savings vulnerable to the volatility of the stock market. Even when employees participate in their plans, stagnant wages, frequent job changes and market downturns make it difficult to accumulate meaningful account balances.

What pension reforms will your Administration promote to enhance coverage, participation and pension protection in both defined-benefit and defined-contribution pension plans?

*Candidate Response:*

## **Conclusion**

Is there anything you would like to add on your background or on issues of importance for the consideration of NCPSSM members?

*Candidate Response:*

**Responses or questions pertaining to the Candidate Questionnaire should be addressed to:**

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