

Solemn Contract

Letter to the editor, [State Port Pilot](#), 03.22.23

When President Franklin Roosevelt created Social Security in 1935, nearly half of elderly Americans lived in poverty. Today, almost 90% of Americans 65 and older depend on it, including me and my wife and many of our friends and neighbors. That hasn't stopped radical Republicans from threatening to take it away.

Representative Mike Kelly (R-PA) is a powerful member of the House Ways and Means Committee. Last year, Kelly warned Republicans that they would "all get thrown out of office [if] we told the truth" about their plans for Social Security. He's right. Radical Republicans have proposed abolishing Social Security altogether (Sen. Mike Lee), "sunsetting" it (Sen. Rick Scott), and privatizing it (Gov. Ron DeSantis), or raising the retirement age (Gov. Nikki Haley.) Those plans strike fear in the hearts of seniors nationwide and throughout Brunswick County where nearly one third of our residents are over 65.

Social Security is a solemn contract. Workers pay in and deserve to receive their hard-earned benefits upon retirement. As President Biden proclaimed, "They earned it!"

This critical covenant has lasted decades, despite deceptive Republican claims that Social Security is going bankrupt. It will last decades more if we simply "scrap the cap" so that millionaires would have to pay the same Social Security tax rate as others.

If you're young and think that this doesn't concern you, think again. Could you pay off your student loans, buy a house, launch your own business, save for your children's college education, or pursue your other dreams if your parents (and perhaps your spouse's) are forced to live off you in retirement?

Social Security prevents that. If the plans that Kelly talked about succeed, every generation will suffer, not just seniors. Working Americans would be trapped, forced to choose between supporting their children or their parents. Seniors without families would be forced back to work, or worse.

These radicals have tried to kill Social Security since they called FDR a socialist for creating it. President Eisenhower described his generation's radical group in a 1954 letter to his brother Edgar. His words are just as meaningful today:

"Should any political party attempt to abolish social security...you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a tiny splinter group, of course, that believes you can do these things...and they are stupid."

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Southport