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*[If you need assistance with your Social Security check, Medicare, or another federal agency, click here to learn about Rep. Israel's Constituent Services .](#)*

### Preserving Social Security

Rep. Israel believes that we need to protect and preserve Social Security so that Americans can retire with peace of mind. He has opposed efforts to privatize Social Security, including H.R. 2109 - a bill to privatize Social Security that was introduced in June 2011, because of the high risk involved with market fluctuations. Rep. Israel is open to Social Security reform efforts that do not turn the program into a stock market risk or otherwise undermine a program on which so many seniors depend.

In March 2009, the Congressional Budget Office forecast that there will not be a Social Security Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for at least three years, making things even harder on seniors who are struggling to get by in this difficult economic climate.

Rep. Israel is a co-sponsor of legislation to address this problem. In the 112th Congress (2011-2012), Rep. Israel supports the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act of 2011 (H.R. 798). He also co-sponsored this legislation in the 111th Congress (2009-2010). The calculation used for seniors is unfortunately based on prices of goods and services for younger workers, whereas seniors are facing skyrocketing health care and energy costs. Rep. Israel supports legislation that would ask the Bureau of Labor Statistics to publish a Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers, which would take into consideration the different costs faced by seniors.

Rep. Israel also voted in favor of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R.1), which included a one-time payment of \$250 to retirees, disabled veterans and SSI recipients.

## **Protecting and Strengthening Medicare**

On April 15, 2011, the House passed a budget resolution (H.Con.Res.34) that would end Medicare as we know it. Rep. Israel voted no and is strongly opposed to this plan. The proposal, introduced by GOP Budget Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan, replaces the current Medicare program with a voucher system that would force seniors eligible to enter the program in 2022 to buy their own costly private insurance. The Senate voted against the Ryan Budget on May 25, 2011.

Rep. Israel believes that Congress and the White House must work together on a plan that will protect and strengthen Medicare, but that ending Medicare's guaranteed benefit must be taken off the table.

## **Prescription Drug Prices Hard on Seniors**

Affordable health care is increasingly dependent on affordable prescription medicines. Too many seniors are forced to go across the border to Canada or simply forgo purchasing their prescription drugs because of the high cost of medicine today. The cost of prescription drugs is increasing at double-digit rates, and seniors on fixed incomes are disproportionately affected by this.

Rep. Israel believes we should fund research on the effectiveness of cheaper alternatives to heavily marketed drugs. He is also fighting the powerful drug lobby in Washington to permit the re-importation of safe, legal drugs from Canada, where American consumers can pay up to 50 percent less for their prescriptions.

Rep. Israel cosponsored the Medicare Prescription Drug Price Negotiation Act of 2007. This legislation, which passed the House of Representatives on January 12, 2007, requires the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate with drug companies for lower prices for Medicare recipients.

## **Helpful Links**

- [Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services](#)
- [Social Security Administration](#)