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5th District, Oklahoma
Committee on Education
and the Workforce
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
House Armed
Services Committee

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[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]:

Thank you for contacting me about Medicare and Social Security policies. I appreciate your input on these important issues.

Both Medicare and Social Security are funded by working Americans throughout the lengths of their careers and help millions of seniors achieve health and retirement security. Therefore, it is understandable that proposals to fundamentally restructure them are met with concern. I support careful, well-designed reforms to these programs, and I appreciate the opportunity to share why I believe they are necessary to preserve Social Security and Medicare for today's seniors and strengthen them for future generations.

America's national debt is growing at an unsustainable rate, and the hard truth is that the climbing cost of these programs is the main reason why. It is now projected that by 2030, every single dollar in federal tax revenue will be spent in just four places: Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and the interest payments on our national debt. At that time, any other function of the federal government, including national defense, will have to be borrowed and added to our national debt for future generations to pay.

When these programs were conceived in the 1930s and 1960s, American demographics were quite different than today. The ratio of employed workers to retirees was much larger at the creation of Medicare and Social Security, and American families gave birth to nearly twice as many children. This created a robust workforce for the last few decades, but is now resulting in a large influx of retirees. These programs are unsustainable in the long-run, and they will eventually lead to a painful collapse unless we act soon.

I support restructuring Medicare from a single-payer, fee-for-service program into a free-market structure which would help seniors receive the best health care for the

lowest possible cost. This would provide premium support from the federal government to help seniors purchase private insurance from a list of several guaranteed options. This is the same type of plan that most federal employees utilize today. It is essential to note, however, that no changes to Medicare would apply to anyone who is currently 55 years old or older.

Steps must also be taken today to start addressing Social Security's long-term solvency. This begins by having conversations about ideas, including: modestly raising the retirement age to match longer life expectancies; adjusting the cost of living; allowing workers to invest Social Security funds privately; and asking wealthier Americans to contribute more during their working years.

While none of these solutions are perfect, I believe we can no longer kick the can down the road. America's future generations deserve far better than mounting national debt and a collapsed senior health care system. As proposals to reform Medicare and Social Security are introduced in the 115th Congress, please know that I will keep your thoughts in mind.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your opinions and concerns with me. Please visit my website at <https://russell.house.gov/> to send another message, read my positions on major issues, sign up for my E-Newsletter, and evaluate your experiences with my office. I look forward to hearing from you again soon. It is an honor to be your voice in Congress.

Sincerely,

Steve Russell
Member of Congress

SR/

Please do not reply to this email, as this box is unattended. Instead, please use the contact form on my website if you have any further comments.