

Biden's Record on Social Security

APRIL 25 1984 - BIDEN CALLS FOR FREEZES TO SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE, WARNING OF EVEN LARGER CUTS

“So, when those of my friends in the Democratic and Republican Party say to me, ‘How do you expect me to vote for your proposal? Does it not freeze social security COLA's for 1 year? Are we not saying there will be no cost-of living increases for 1 year?’ The answer to that is ‘Yes,” that is what I am saying. But I believe if we do not do it for 1 year, we will be debating next year whether we will have it at all again. That will be the issue, not whether or not we stop it for a year. It will be whether or not it is going to be permanently reduced or permanently eliminated, and whether or not we make other significant changes in medicare and significant changes in social security generally”

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JANUARY 31, 1995 - BIDEN SAYS A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT COULD FORCE “DRASTIC REDUCTIONS IN SOCIAL SECURITY.” (HE VOTED FOR IT.)

“The balanced budget amendment makes no provision whatsoever for the unique characteristics of the Social Security trust fund. Instead, it treats Social Security revenues and outlays as ordinary Federal budget. This means in the years that Social Security is generating hundreds of billions of dollars in surplus revenues it will be used to cover hundreds of billions of dollars worth of deficits that the rest of the Federal budget is creating. After 2014, when the trust fund goes into deficit to the tune of tens or hundreds of billions of dollars a year, we in Congress will have to cut that much from the rest of the budget to make up for the deficit. What does it mean? It means that for the next 20 years or so, revenues from the Social Security trust fund will make it look like we have balanced the budget when in fact we have not, and after that the huge outlays from the trust fund will force drastic reductions in the rest of Federal spending, or drastic reductions in Social Security.”

FEBRUARY 9, 1995 - BIDEN SAYS THAT A BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT “MEANS THAT SOCIAL SECURITY IS GOING TO GET HIT.” (HE VOTED FOR IT.)

“I want to thank the Senator for allowing me to interrupt him with all these questions. It seems pretty clear to me this is about two things: One, they need the Social Security dollars to make the deficit look like it is less than it is, and then the next step is they are going to need to try to deal with changing it to increase the amount of money they get in the trust funds to make the deficit look even less, which means that Social Security is going to get hit.”

[Click here](#) to read the Congressional Record.

FEBRUARY 24, 1995 - BIDEN BACKS BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT AFTER SAYING IT WILL CUT SOCIAL SECURITY

Key Democrats back balanced-budget amendment

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution gained crucial Senate ground Thursday with declarations of support from Democrats Tom Harkin and Joseph Biden. Both men voted against the politically popular measure last year and confront re-election campaigns in 1996.

Their decisions left a handful of undecided Democrats, some of whom have raised objections, in a position to determine the fate of a measure at the core of the Republican drive to rein in government. "I think we are very close" to having the two-thirds majority needed to prevail, said Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho. He added he was not ready to declare victory.

Harkin announced his decision in a telephone call to reporters in his home state of Iowa. "The balanced-budget amendment is far from perfect, but it's the best available alternative right now," he said. "It's time we pass on to our kids more opportunity, not more debt."

Biden conveyed his decision in a statement to news organizations Wednesday evening that said he was choosing between "an imperfect amendment or continued spending."

He reviewed earlier measures he had supported to rein in deficits, said they all had proved unsuccessful and added: "I have concluded that there is nothing left to try except the balanced-budget amendment."

Both senators noted they had backed unsuccessful Democratic attempts to shelter Social Security from cuts needed to erase deficits.

Harkin, who voted for a balanced-budget amendment in 1986 but against final passage a year ago, told his interviewers that the politically easy thing for him was to vote against the measure, since many of the voting groups who customarily support him are against it. Biden said through an aide that re-election considerations played no role in his decision.

Still, they became the second and third Democrats facing re-election next year — after Montana's Max Baucus — to reverse their opposition of a year ago on a measure that commands approval ratings in the 70 percent range in the polls.

In contrast, Democratic Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota, whose term ends in 1998, and Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, re-elected last November, voted for the measure a year ago when it went down to defeat and have announced their opposition this year.

The amendment is scheduled for a vote Tuesday, and the last several days have been marked by increasing partisanship. President Clinton and White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta have been lobbying senators by telephone to oppose the measure.

Supporters said Harkin and Biden raised the vote total to 64, three shy of the 67 needed to send the House-passed measure to the states for ratification.

In addition, they said they were expecting support from Democrats Byron Dorgan of North Dakota, whose office lists him as leaning in favor of the measure, and John Breaux of Louisiana.



Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., says he will support the balanced-budget amendment.

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[Click here](#) to read the article. [Click here](#) for Biden's vote in support of the amendment.

SEPTEMBER 31, 1995 -- IN SENATE FLOOR SPEECH, BIDEN BRAGS OF TRYING TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY 4 TIMES

Biden: "When I argued that we should freeze Federal spending, I meant Social Security as well. I meant Medicare and Medicaid. I meant veterans benefits. I meant every single solitary thing in the Government. And I not only tried it once, I tried it twice, I tried it a third time, and I tried it a fourth time."

[Click here](#) to watch the video, [click here](#) to read the Congressional Record.

NOVEMBER 16, 1995 -- IN SENATE FLOOR SPEECH, BIDEN BRAGS OF TRYING TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY 4 TIMES

"I am a Democrat that voted for the constitutional amendment to balance the budget. I have introduced on four occasions—four occasions—entire plans to balance a

budget...I tried with Senator Grassley back in the 1980's to freeze all Government spending, including Social Security, including everything.”

[Click here](#) to watch the video, [click here](#) to read the Congressional Record.

APRIL 27, 2007 -- ON MEET THE PRESS, BIDEN SAYS SOCIAL SECURITY CUTS MUST BE ON THE TABLE, DURING HIS CAMPAIGN IN WHICH HE WAS [FLOATING](#) THE IDEA OF RAISING THE RETIREMENT AGE

RUSSERT: But, senator, we have a deficit. We have Social Security and Medicare looming. The number of people on Social Security and Medicare is now 40 million people. It's going to be 80 million in 15 years. Would you consider looking at those programs, age of eligibility...

SEN. BIDEN: Absolutely.

MR. RUSSERT: ...cost of living, put it all on the table.

SEN. BIDEN: The answer is absolutely.

[Click here](#) to watch the video, [click here](#) to read the transcript

SEPTEMBER 26, 2007 - BIDEN TOUTED HE WAS PART OF A DEAL TO RAISE THE SOCIAL SECURITY RETIREMENT AGE

“I'm probably the only one up here who's going to say that. But the truth of the matter is, you've stated it. You're either going to cut benefits or you're going to go ahead and raise taxes above the first \$97,000. And by the way, I was in that room with Pat Moynihan. It was Joe Biden, Pat Moynihan, Bob Dole -- it was also George Mitchell -- when we made that deal. I'll never forget Bob Dole turning to Pat Moynihan and saying, we all got to jump in this boat at the same time.”

[Click here](#) to watch the video. [Click here](#) for the 1983 vote Biden is discussing.

NOVEMBER 2007 -- BIDEN REITERATES CALL FOR “TOUGH DECISIONS” ON SOCIAL SECURITY

Biden: “The American people know we have to fix Social Security. They know we can't grow our way to a solution. They know we're going to have to make some tough decisions. They're ready to make those decisions. They're ready to step up. We have to be ready to straightforwardly tell them what we're about to do.”

[Click here](#) to watch the video

MAY 2018 - BIDEN CALLS FOR SOCIAL SECURITY “ADJUSTMENTS”

Biden: “Paul Ryan was correct when he did the tax code. What’s the first thing he decided we had to go after? Social Security and Medicare. Now, we need to do something about Social Security and Medicare. That’s the only way you can find room to pay for it.”

Biden added in the speech that Social Security and Medicare “still needs adjustments.”

[Click here](#) to watch the video, [click here](#) to read the transcript.

[The Week](#) noted that in the Brookings speech, Biden “did indeed call for cuts to Social Security and Medicare in a 2018 speech at the Brookings Institution — part of a decades-long career of hawking pointless austerity.”

[Alex Lawson](#), director of Social Security Works, recently wrote that “PolitiFact wrongly ranked the statement from the Sanders newsletter as ‘false’ because they willfully refused to understand what Biden said in the speech—and how it represents decades of Washington establishment consensus on cutting the American people’s earned Social Security and Medicare benefits.”

[The Intercept](#) wrote “after a Sanders campaign newsletter continued the attack on Biden’s Social Security record, the Biden campaign complained to fact-checkers at Politifact that his comments were being taken out of context. Placed in context, however, Biden’s record on Social Security is far worse than one offhand remark. Indeed, Biden has been advocating for cuts to Social Security for roughly 40 years.”

[Click here](#) for video. [Click here](#) to read the Congressional Record.