

Set 1: senior, medicar, prescript, drug, lower, current, compani, price

Set 2: spend, billion, defens, propos, dollar, budget, prioriti, cut

Set 3: welfar, budget, capit, veto, educ, gain, child, centuri

Set 4: social, secur, trust, surplus, fund, promis, benefit, retir

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AUDIENCE President Clinton, my name is Jack Fleck. Im retired Air Force pilot. Sir, its officially forecast that our annual Medicare and Social Security deficits are measured in the trillions of dollars next century. Depending on who you listen to, Social Security will be bankrupted in either 2025 or 2030. I feel this is grossly unfair, especially to our younger generation who are losing faith in the system. My question is this; Assuming you agree that our entitlement programs are on an unsustainable course, what specific reforms do you propose?

BILL CLINTON First of all, there are two different things. Social Security and Medicare are entirely different in terms of the financial stabilities. Lets talk about them separately. Social Security is stable until, as you pointed out, at least the third decade of the next century. But wed like to have a Social Security fund that has about 70 years of life instead of about 30 years of life. What we have to do is simply to make some adjustments to take account of the fact that the baby boomers, people like me, are bigger in number than the people that went just before us and the people that come just after us. And I think what well plainly do is what we did in 1983 when Senator Dole served, and this is something I think he did a good job on when he served on the Social Security commission and they made some modest changes in Social Security to make sure that it would be alive and well into the 21st century. And we will do that. Its obvious that there are certain things that have to be done and there are 50 or 60 different options, and a bipartisan commission to take it out of politics, will make recommendations and build support for the people. Medicare is different. Medicare needs help now. I have proposed a budget which would put ten years on the life of the Medicare trust fund. Thats more than its had a lot of the time in the last years. It would save a lot of money through more managed care, by giving more options, more preventative care and lowering the inflation rate and the prices were paying providers without having the kind of big premium increases and out- of- pocket costs that the budget I vetoed would provide. Then that would give us ten years to do with Medicare what were going to do with Social Security; have a bipartisan group look at what we have to do to save it when the baby boomers retire. But now we can, we ought to pass this budget now and put ten years on it right away so no one has to worry about it.