

Resource 4 (1 of 4)**Excerpts For and Against Medicare**

Set A**Congressman's Report, Morris Udall, 2d District of Arizona**

March 31, 1965

Vol. IV, No. 2

Medicare v. Eldercare—A Big Issue Finally Resolved

...

WHAT THE PUBLIC WANTS

In a democracy the public eventually gets what it wants by way of legislation. I have received many letters demanding to know why I favor Medicare “when the people of my state and the country are opposed.” The answer is that all the information I can obtain indicates that a majority of my constituents and of the American people favor passage of this legislation:

** The nationwide Harris Poll recently reported that, if they had to choose between Medicare and lower taxes, or Medicare and a balanced budget, Americans would choose Medicare by a margin of 2 to 1.

** Last year I sent a questionnaire to every resident of my district, and the responses ran 3 to 2 in favor of Medicare.

** An expensive private poll in Arizona last year revealed that a big majority of Democrats and a narrow majority of Republicans favored Medicare.

DEMOCRACY AT WORK

Thus I believe that in a very real sense the final decision was made, not by those of us in Congress, but by the people of this country who have in various ways made their wishes known. This is an example of the workings of a representative democracy. While there may be delays and protracted debate, in the long run legislation is based on popular support. I have read all your letters and studied each of these proposals, and it is my conviction that we are doing the right thing. Within a few years, in my judgment, many of those who bitterly and sincerely opposed this law will wonder why we waited until 1965 to meet this serious need.

Source: Udall, M. K. (1965, March 31). Medicare v. Eldercare—a big issue finally resolved. Retrieved from <http://www.library.arizona.edu/exhibits/udall/congrept/89th/650331.htm>

Resource 4 (2 of 4)

Excerpts For and Against Medicare

President Johnson on Why the Elderly Should Get Support from the Federal Government

After it was suggested to him that Social Security beneficiaries should get a back payment because it would be good for the economy, President Johnson disagreed. He said that the elderly should get their back payment because

“. . . they are entitled to it. That's an obligation of ours. It's just like your mother writing you and saying she wants \$20, and I'd always sent mine a \$100 when she did. I never did it because I thought it was going to be good for the economy of Austin [Texas]. I always did it because I thought she was entitled to it. . . . [In defending the idea in Congress] We've just got to say that by God you can't treat grandma this way. She's entitled to it and we promised it to her.”

Source: DeWitt, L. (2003, May). The Medicare program as a capstone to the Great Society-Recent revelations in the LBJ White House tapes. Retrieved from <http://www.larrydewitt.org/Essays/MedicareDaddy.htm>

Resource 4 (3 of 4)**Excerpts For and Against Medicare**

Set B**Ronald Reagan Speaks Out Against Socialized Medicine**

Ronald Reagan Speaks Out Against Socialized Medicine is a 1961 LP featuring Ronald Reagan.

One of the traditional methods of imposing . . . socialism on a people has been by way of medicine.

It's very easy to disguise a medical program as a humanitarian project. Most people are a little reluctant to oppose anything that suggests medical care for people who possibly can't afford it. . . .

They want to attach this bill [an early version of Medicare] to Social Security and they say, "Here is a great insurance program, now instituted, now working." Let's take a look at Social Security itself. Again, very few of us disagree with the original premise that there should be some form of savings that would keep destitution from following unemployment by reason of death, disability or old age. And to this end, Social Security was adopted, but it was never intended to supplant private savings, private insurance, pension programs of unions and industries . . .

[Reagan argues that the consequence of federally administered health insurance for the elderly will mean that, in essence, doctors will be working for the government and may lose the right to determine where and how they will practice medicine. He goes on:]

I know how I'd feel if you my fellow citizens, decided that to be an actor I had to be a government employee and work in a national theater. . . .

Write a letter [to your congressman] . . . and tell him that you . . . demand the continuation of our free enterprise system.

You and I can do this [stop this Medicare legislation]. The only way we can do it is by writing to our congressmen. . . .

If you don't, this program I promise you, will pass . . . and behind it will come other federal programs that will invade every area of freedom as we have known it in this country . . . and if you don't do this and I don't do this, one of these days we are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children, what it once was like in America when men were free.

Listen to the entire recording: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AYrIDlrLDSQ>

Source: Liberty Voice. (2009, September 8). Ronald Reagan's 1961 coffee cup speech. Retrieved from <http://www.thelibertyvoice.com/ronald-reagan%E2%80%99s-1961-coffee-cup-speech>

Resource 4 (4 of 4)**Excerpts For and Against Medicare**

Barry Goldwater, U.S. Senator from Arizona 1953–1965 and 1969–1987 and Republican Presidential Candidate (Running Against Lyndon Johnson, 1964)

Having given our pensioners their medical care in kind, why not food baskets, why not public housing accommodations, why not vacation resorts, why not a ration of cigarettes for those who smoke and of beer for those who drink.

Source: Nichols, J. (2011). *The “S” word: A short history of an American tradition . . . socialism*. New York: Verso Press.

From Barry Goldwater’s Essay “The Conscience of a Conservative”

The Conservative realizes . . . that man’s development, in both its spiritual and material aspects, is not something that can be directed by outside forces. Every man, for his individual good and for the good of his society, is responsible for his own development. The choices that govern his life are choices that he must make: they cannot be made by any other human being, or by a collectivity of human beings. If the Conservative is less anxious than his Liberal brethren to increase Social Security “benefits,” it is because he is more anxious than his Liberal brethren that people be free throughout their lives to spend their earnings when and as they see fit. . . .

There are a number of ways in which the power of government can be measured. . . .

[Another way] is the extent of government interference in the daily lives of individuals. The farmer is told how much wheat he can grow. The wage earner is at the mercy of national union leaders whose great power is a direct consequence of federal labor legislation. The businessman is hampered by a maze of government regulations, and often by direct government competition. The government takes six per cent of most payrolls in Social Security Taxes and thus compels millions of individuals to postpone until later years the enjoyment of wealth they might otherwise enjoy today. Increasingly, the federal government sets standards of education, health and safety. . . .

The turn [away from the stifling omnipresence of government] will come when . . . Americans in hundreds of communities throughout the nation, decide to put the man in office who is pledged to enforce the Constitution and restore the Republic. Who will proclaim in a campaign speech “I have little interest in stream-lining government or in making it more efficient, for I mean to reduce its size. I do not undertake to promote welfare, for I propose to extend freedom. My aim is not to pass laws, but to repeal them. It is not to inaugurate new programs, but to cancel old ones that do violence to the Constitution, or that have failed in their purpose, or that impose on the people an unwarranted financial burden. I will not attempt to discover whether legislation is “needed” before I have first determined whether it is constitutionally permissible. And if I should later be attacked for neglecting my constituents’ “interests,” I shall reply that I was informed their main interest is liberty and that in that cause I am doing the very best I can.

Source: Goldwater, B. (2004). The 2004 essay: The conscience of a conservative. Heritage Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.heritage.org/about/speeches/president-essays>