**BACKGROUND:**

**Cotton Voted To Cut Social Security Benefits**

**Cotton**

**Was The Only Member Of The Arkansas Delegation To Vote for Reckless**

**Republican Study Committee Budget That Raised Social Security**

**Eligibility Age And Cut Benefits**.

In 2013, Cotton voted for the extreme Republican Study Committee budget

that would provide $2.732 trillion in new budget authority for fiscal

2014, not including off-budget accounts. The budget was rejected by a

vote of 104-132. [CQ; H Con Res 25, [Vote #86](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2013/roll086.xml), 3/20/13]

* **Republican Study Budget Cut Social Security Benefits Using Chained CPI.**
* According to the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, “Unlike
* other budgets, [Republican Study Budget] also addresses Social Security
* specifically by switching to the chained CPI for cost-of-living
* adjustments and increasing the full retirement age to 70 and indexing it
* for life expectancy.” [Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, [3/19/13](http://crfb.org/blogs/republican-study-committee-adds-alternative-budgets)]
* **AARP: 92 Year Old Retiree Would See An 8.4% Cut In Benefits Under Chained CPI.** According
* to the AARP, “Changing the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) using a
* chained CPI would have a detrimental impact on the economic wellbeing of
* older and disabled Americans and their family members who receive
* benefits from Social Security. Small reductions to the annual COLA will
* accumulate over time so that the largest reductions in benefits will be
* on the oldest beneficiaries and the long-term disabled. For example, 92-
* year-old beneficiaries who were on the program for 30 years would see
* an 8.4% cut in benefits. Disabled children could face even larger
* benefit cuts over their lifetime. Oldest Americans are the least able to
* absorb cuts to their benefits as they are more reliant on Social
* Security for their income and have higher out-of-pocket medical spending
* and a higher poverty rate than younger Americans.” [AARP, [October 2012](http://www.aarp.org/work/social-security/info-10-2012/proposed-changes-to-cola-insight-AARP-ppi-econ-sec.html)]
* **Chained CPI Would Be At Least A 5% Cut To Social Security Benefits.** According to Dylan Matthews of the Washington Post, “All
* told, chained CPI raises average taxes by about 0.19 percent of income.
* So, taken all together, it’s basically a big (5 percent over 12 years;
* more, if you take a longer view) across-the-board cut in Social Security
* benefits paired with a 0.19 percent income surtax.” [Matthews,
* Washington Post, [12/11/12](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/wp/2012/12/11/everything-you-need-to-know-about-chained-cpi-in-one-post/)]

**Cotton Voted For Multiple Plans To Turn Medicare Into A Voucher System**

**Cotton Voted for Republican Study Committee Budget That Transformed Medicare Into Voucher System For Seniors**.

In 2013, Cotton voted for the Republican Study Committee budget that

“would assume the transformation of Medicare into a premium support

program that would compete against private plans.” The budget was

rejected by a vote of 104-132. [CQ; H Con Res 25, [Vote #86](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2013/roll086.xml), 3/20/13]

**Cotton Voted for FY 2014 Ryan Budget.** In

2013, Cotton voted for passage of the controversial Ryan Budget that

would “[restructure] of Medicare into a ‘premium support’" system

beginning in 2024. It would call for an overhaul of the tax code, under

which the alternative minimum tax would be repealed, the six current

individual income tax brackets would be consolidated into two and tax

credits and deductions would be eliminated or curtailed. The budget was

adopted by a vote of 221-207. [CQ; H Con Res 25, [Vote #88](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2013/roll088.xml), 3/21/13]

* **Arkansas Democrat-Gazette: Ryan Budget “Would Transform Medicare Into A Voucher-Like System Known As Premium Support.”** At
* a time when retiring baby boomers and mounting medical prices have made
* federal health-care spending the biggest single driver of the nation's
* rising debt, the House budget from Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis**.,** wouldtransform Medicare into
* a voucher-like system known as premium support, which Obama and
* Democrats adamantly oppose. But Cantor, like Obama, is suggesting
* cost-saving changes within the existing Medicare program.“ [Arkansas-Democrat Gazette, 3/29/13]
* **Texarkana**
* **Gazette: Ryan Plan “Calls For Entitlement Cuts, Including Medicaid Cuts**
* **And A Voucher System Privatizing Medicare For Future Recipients.”** According
* to an editorial by the Texarkana Gazette, “But the president may have a
* point as well. Speaking against a plan by U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisc.,
* that calls for entitlement cuts, including Medicaid cuts and a voucher
* system privatizing Medicare for future recipients, he said the proposal
* would amount to a tax on middle-class families and the poor.”
* [Editorial, Texarkana Gazette, [3/18/13](http://www.texarkanagazette.com/news/2013/03/18/looming-crisis-816920.php)]
* **CBPP: Medicare “Beneficiaries Would Have To Pay Higher Premiums To Participate In Traditional Medicare.”** According
* to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “In areas where Medicare
* incurs relatively high costs, the amount of the premium-support payment
* would equal the cost of a relatively inexpensive private plan, and
* beneficiaries would have to pay higher premiums to participate in
* traditional Medicare.” [CBPP, [3/15/13](http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3922)]
* **CBPP: Seniors Would Have To Pay More To Keep The Health Plans And The Doctors They Like.** According
* to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Over time, seniors
* would have to pay more to keep the health plans and the doctors they
* like, or they would get fewer benefits.” [CBPP, [3/15/13](http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3922)]
* **CNN: Ryan Plan Would Provide Seniors Subsidies With Government Subsidies To Purchase Private Insurance.** According
* to CNN, “Workers who turn 65 in 2024 or later would be able to choose
* between a variety of private health insurance plans, along with the
* traditional Medicare option. They receive a subsidy from the federal
* government to cover or offset the cost of their Medicare premium. The
* subsidy would cover the cost of the second-least-expensive private plan
* or the Medicare option, whichever is less, in the first year. So if
* seniors select pricier coverage, they would have to pay the difference
* in cost. And they would receive a rebate if they selected a cheaper
* plan.” [CNN, [3/12/13](http://money.cnn.com/2013/03/12/news/economy/ryan-medicare-republicans/)]
* **GOP Budget Repeals Provision That Closed Donut Hole in Medicare Prescription Drug Program**.
* According to the Bipartisan Policy Center, “Among other elements, the
* House GOP budget would repeal: The provisions that closed the “doughnut
* hole” in Medicare Part D.” [Bipartisan Policy Center, [3/12/13](http://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/2013/03/ryan-fy14-budget?wpisrc=nl_wonk)]
* **Ryan Budget Would Increase Prescription Drug Costs For Seniors By Re-opening Prescription Drug Doughnut Hole.**
* “The Ryan budget would repeal health reform’s provisions that improve
* Medicare benefits, including closure of the Medicare prescription drug
* donut hole and coverage of preventive services without cost sharing.
* These repeals would adversely affect current Medicare beneficiaries as
* well as those not yet eligible. Health reform has begun to close the
* donut hole — the gap in Medicare prescription drug coverage that many
* seniors experienced once their annual drug costs exceeded $2,840.
* Before health reform, seniors had no additional coverage until their
* costs hit $6,448.  Starting in 2011, seniors in the coverage gap began
* receiving a discount on brand-name and generic prescription drugs.
* These discounts and Medicare coverage will gradually increase until
* 2020, when the entire donut hole is closed.  The Ryan budget would
* reopen the drug donut hole. Health reform also requires both private
* insurance companies and Medicare to cover preventive care services
* without any cost sharing.  Preventive care includes screenings for
* chronic illnesses like diabetes and cancer and routine vaccines.  The
* Ryan budget would reinstate cost sharing in Medicare for these
* preventive benefits. [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, [3/15/13](http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3922)]

**Cotton Supported Both The FY 2013 Ryan Plan And The Republican Study Committee Plan.** The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

reported in 2012: “For his part, Tom Cotton says he supports either the

Paul Ryan plan or something called the Republican Study Committee

plan.” [Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, 5/29/12]

**PolitiFact: Voucher Was An Accurate Description Of Republican’s Premium Support System For Medicare.**

According to PolitiFact, “In a TV interview, Chivukula claimed

Republicans ‘have declared that they’re going to convert the Medicare

program into a voucher program.’ Starting in 2023, the Republicans’ plan

would provide premium support payments for new beneficiaries to

purchase private insurance or a plan that acts like traditional

Medicare. The term ‘voucher’ generally describes this approach.”

[PolitiFact, [8/31/12](http://www.politifact.com/new-jersey/statements/2012/sep/10/upendra-chivukula/republicans-plan-convert-medicare-voucher-program-/)]

**Cotton Voted For Plan That Would Raise Retirement Age To 70**

**Cotton Voted for Republican Study Committee Budget That Transformed Medicare Into Voucher System For Seniors**.

In 2013, Cotton voted for the Republican Study Committee budget that

“would assume the transformation of Medicare into a premium support

program that would compete against private plans.” The budget was

rejected by a vote of 104-132. [CQ; H Con Res 25, [Vote #86](http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2013/roll086.xml), 3/20/13]

* **Republican Study Budget Raised Medicare And Social Security Eligibility Age To 70.** According to the Hill, “The RSC budget, which Chairman Steve Scalise (R-La.) previewed on Friday,
* would begin Ryan’s ‘premium support’ for Medicare five years earlier,
* impacting people age 59 and younger. It was gradually increase the
* eligibility age for Social Security and Medicare to 70, with the
* phase-up beginning in 2024.” [The Hill, [3/18/13](http://thehill.com/blogs/on-the-money/budget/145068-house-conservatives%E2%80%99-budget-balances-in-4-years-raises-retirement)]

**Pryor Supported Programs That Cut Billions In Fraud And Waste From Medicare And Social Security**

**Pryor Voted To Give “HHS Several New Weapons To Use In Its Battle Against Fraud And Abuse” In Medicare.** According

to Health Affairs, “Affordable Care Act gave HHS several new weapons to

use in its battle against fraud and abuse. CMS now has greater

authority to screen out questionable providers and suppliers before they

enroll in Medicare. It can also suspend payments to those providers

under investigation, and even temporarily halt enrollment of new

providers or suppliers in certain parts of the country when fraud,

waste, and abuse are suspected. Also in 2010 CMS consolidated the

separate program integrity efforts in Medicare and Medicaid under a

unified Center for Program Integrity. Bringing these activities under

one umbrella has allowed officials to pursue a more strategic and

coordinated set of policies and activities, such as describe below.”

[Health Affairs, 7/31/12]