Washington Spent the Money.

Apparently, the Problem Is Grandma

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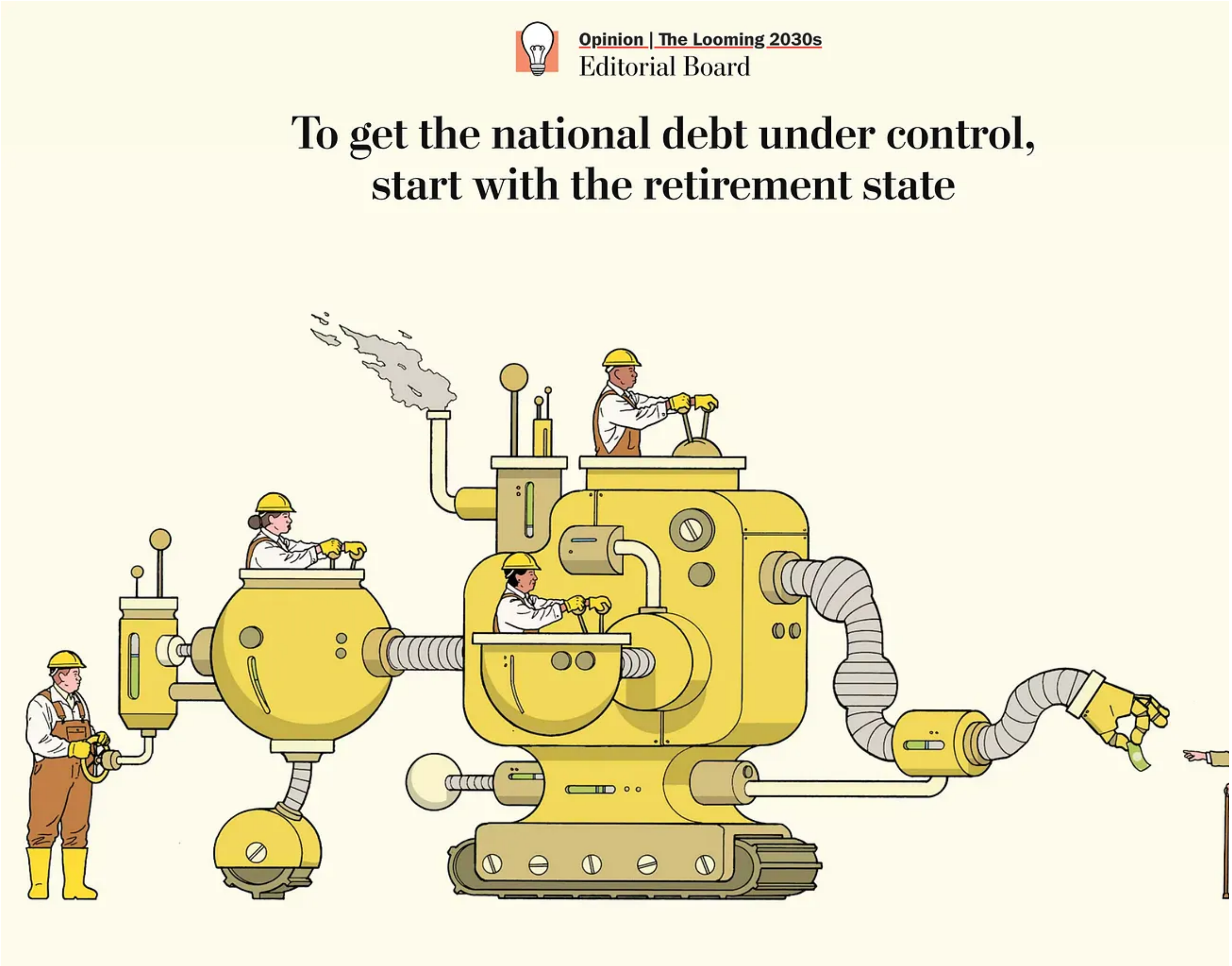
The *Washington Post* editorial board has apparently recently discovered that Sc Security and Medicare are in trouble, and they are shocked, shocked, I tell you

That part is true, and there is no reason to pretend otherwise. This is a fact th

anyone not living under a rock has known for a very long time. According to t
Social Security Trustees Report, the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance Trust F
projected to exhaust its reserves in late 2032. At that point, incoming revenue
cover only about 78 percent of scheduled benefits. Medicare's Hospital Insura
Trust Fund is projected to exhaust its reserves in 2033. These are serious prob
have been developing for decades, and Congress has known about them for de
As have the we the American people.

But in a remarkably biased editorial titled "To get the national debt under con
start with the retirement state," the entire *Washington Post* editorial board mar
take a story about decades of federal fiscal irresponsibility, demographic chan
the extraordinary cost of American medicine and turn it into a story about sen
having too much money.



The underlying fiscal problem is real. The editorial analysis of how we got her particularly who should now be made to pay for it, is considerably less impres

The Money Wasn't "Not Saved"

The first bit of editorial sleight of hand comes almost immediately. The Post e that for many years Social Security collected more in payroll taxes than it paid benefits. Then it tells readers that "the government didn't save that extra mon Instead, Social Security bought Treasury bonds and the government spent the

That formulation is technically clever and editorially sloppy. The Social Secur

surplus did not simply disappear. By law, the trust funds invested their reserve
interest-bearing obligations of the United States Treasury. The Treasury then
borrowed and spent that money. Those are two different transactions, and col
them into the phrase “the government didn’t save it” obscures the most impor
of the story.

If I purchase a Treasury bond, the Treasury will spend the money I lent it. Tha
not mean my Treasury security somehow ceases to exist. It means the United
government owes me money. The same principle applies to Social Security. Fo
decades, American workers paid Social Security taxes in excess of the benefits
paid to retirees. The federal government borrowed those surpluses, issued Tre
obligations to the trust funds, and spent the borrowed money elsewhere. Now
Security needs those securities redeemed, which means Treasury has to obtain
money through taxes, spending reductions, or additional borrowing.

That is a genuine federal fiscal problem. But it is not the same thing as saying
money was never saved, nor does it somehow make the Treasury securities hel
Social Security imaginary assets.

In fact, the accurate description is more damning. Washington borrowed deca
Social Security surpluses to help finance the rest of government. Now that Soc
Security needs the money back, the sages of the Washington Post editorial boa
us the problem is the “retirement state.”

Medicare Benefits Are Not a Christmas Present

The Post then informs us that a married couple earning around $100,000 and t
65 in 2025 can expect to receive Medicare benefits worth 4.4 times what they p
Medicare payroll taxes. It is an effective statistic because it makes Medicare se
an extraordinarily generous gift bestowed upon retirees at the expense of ever

else. Except Medicare was never designed as an individual retirement savings something the Post itself acknowledges, and there is another rather importan problem with this comparison (beyond the overt incitement of inter-generatio conflict).

The “value” of those Medicare benefits is largely a measure of what Medicare American medical care. If a hospital charges Medicare $30,000 for a procedur elderly patient did not suddenly become $30,000 richer. The American medica charged $30,000. Those are not remotely the same thing. Yet the Post uses the enormous cost of Medicare benefits as evidence of Medicare's generosity to it recipients, without spending nearly enough time asking why the underlying m care costs so much in the first place.

That omission matters because the United States has one of the most expensi health-care systems in the world. Drug prices, hospital consolidation, adminis overhead, specialty drugs, provider monopolies, site-of-service pricing and th increasingly complicated Medicare Advantage system all contribute to what t ultimately spend. Medicare Advantage payments for Parts A and B alone reac roughly $534 billion in 2025, and serious policy organizations across the politi spectrum have raised concerns about overpayments associated with coding pr and other features of the program.

There are obvious places to start reining in Medicare costs before asking seni pay more: attack fraud and improper payments, audit Medicare Advantage pla aggressively, reduce administrative waste, move care to lower-cost settings wh medically appropriate, and force down inflated drug prices. Dr. Mehmet Oz is pursuing several of these at CMS, including auditing every eligible Medicare Advantage contract, tightening fraud enforcement, reforming payment for ou care and continuing Medicare drug-price negotiations. CMS reports that its p integrity efforts produced $41.9 billion in savings in fiscal 2025 alone.

Before deciding that Grandma is receiving too much Medicare, perhaps we sh first ask whether taxpayers are paying rational prices for Grandma's medical c Those are very different questions. The Post focuses heavily on how much Me spends on beneficiaries while giving remarkably little attention to why the un medical care has become so expensive.

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This is where the editorial's underlying philosophy becomes much clearer. Th argues that "a big chunk of Social Security benefits goes to people who don't r them," pointing out that more than one-third of benefits supposedly go to sen incomes above $100,000.

Notice what has happened to the language. These are no longer Americans wh 40 or 50 years paying Social Security taxes. They are now people who "don't ne money from the fund that they have paid into. The fact that they paid into the throughout their working lives becomes secondary to the editorial board's jud about how much money they should be allowed to have in retirement. Yet mor incitement of inter-generational conflict.

This would fundamentally change what Social Security is. Social Security has historically functioned as social insurance. You work, you pay into the system, employer pays into the system, and your eventual benefit is calculated accordi statutory formula based upon your earnings history. The benefit formula is alr progressive, but Social Security is deliberately not structured as an ordinary w program.

The Post wants to move toward something quite different: a means-tested ben poorer retirees combined with compulsory private savings for everybody else. explicitly praises versions of that model used elsewhere. That is a perfectly leg policy position, but it should be described honestly. This is not merely “saving Security.”

Their plan would transform Social Security from an earned retirement benefit financed by mandatory contributions over a lifetime of work and provided wit expectation that those contributions would produce benefits at retirement, in something much closer to a means-tested welfare program. That is not a minc adjustment. It changes the basic bargain under which Americans have paid Sc Security taxes for generations.

The editorial also barely considers an incentive problem. Imagine two people earn approximately the same amount over their working lives. One spends aln everything. The other saves diligently, contributes to retirement accounts, pay home, invests carefully, and perhaps builds a small business. Both paid Social taxes for 40 years. When they retire, Washington looks at the second person ai that because she behaved responsibly and accumulated substantial assets, she longer “needs” the Social Security benefit she paid into.

We have now created a penalty for thrift. The irony is that the Post itself celeb enormous growth in private retirement savings as evidence that America has since Social Security was created. Americans responded to decades of governr encouragement to save for retirement, accumulated wealth, and now that accu wealth becomes the justification for reducing the benefits they spent their wo lives financing. That is quite a trick, but the Washington Post editorial board have no self-awareness of their sleight of hand.

Then Comes Medicare Rationing

The Medicare proposal is even more revealing. The Post recommends limiting addition of new services to Medicare because much of future spending growth come from coverage of new treatments. It presents this as politically attractiv because existing services would not have to be reduced. That language is won antiseptic, but what it describes is rationing.

Today's senior keeps today's cancer treatment. Tomorrow's senior may not rec tomorrow's cancer treatment because Medicare decides it is too expensive to This is the chronic problem that pervades socialized medicine programs throu the world. Just ask seniors north of the border in the people's republic of Can Canadian government's response to this problem appears to be their medical assistance in dying legislation (MAID). Perhaps some form of rigorous cost-effectiveness analysis really is necessary. No health-care system has unlimited resources, and there is a legitimate debate about whether every new drug or technology that produces a marginal benefit should automatically be purchas taxpayers at whatever price a manufacturer demands.

But the editorial board should at least have the courage to describe the policy accurately. "Limiting the addition of new services" sounds considerably nicer telling Americans that Medicare may decline to cover future medical innovati because the government cannot afford them. The distinction is especially imp when some of the fastest-growing areas of Medicare spending involve precise new drugs, biologics and specialty treatments.

Having softened the language around restricting future care, the editorial arr other preferred solution: "*average seniors should be paying more than they current* There it is. The federal government has an enormous Medicare financing pro after remarkably little examination of why American medicine costs what it d Post concludes that ordinary retirees should reach further into their pockets.

Well, that certainly benefits the medical-industrial complex.

Seniors should pay for Congress's folly!

What is most striking about the editorial is how quickly retirees become the o place to look for money. Where is the serious discussion of hospital consolida monopoly pricing? Where are the drug costs, administrative expenses, Medica Advantage overpayments, aggressive coding practices, fraud and improper pa Where is the serious examination of why the United States manages to spend more on health care than other developed countries?

The Social Security discussion is similarly narrow. Legitimate arguments can about changes to the taxable wage base, payroll taxes, retirement ages, benefit formulas, labor force participation, economic growth, productivity, and immi None of these offers a painless solution, and that is precisely the point. A seri examination of Social Security insolvency should force readers to confront the and tradeoffs of the major alternatives.

Instead, the Post offers a remarkably convenient progression. Social Security a Medicare face insolvency. Seniors have accumulated substantial wealth. There seniors should receive less Social Security and pay more for Medicare. That is actuarial conclusion forced upon us by mathematics. It is a policy preference a who should bear the burden, presented as though it naturally follows from the numbers.

The "Retirement State"

Perhaps the most revealing phrase appears in the headline itself. The Post call Security and Medicare the "retirement state." Not the federal spending proble the entitlement-financing problem. Not the health-care cost problem. The ret state.

By the end of the article, America's elderly have become "the nation's wealthie generation," possessing "significant wealth to draw on." That framing subtly c the nature of the debate. Someone will have to take the fall, so let's make retir source of this evil. A structural problem created by demographics, medical inf congressional promises, decades of federal borrowing, and the unwillingness (successive administrations to confront politically difficult choices becomes ar intergenerational distribution problem. Older Americans have accumulated to Therefore, government should give them less and charge them more.

There is also a larger ideological pattern here that the Post does not disclose. ' hardly the first time its opinion pages have portrayed older Americans as havi accumulated too much wealth at the expense of the young. Just last week, the published an essay titled "**Shift the safety net toward the young**," explicitly ar that government redistributes too much from young people to old people. In J "**No more regressive subsidies for seniors**," which described Americans betw and 74 as the wealthiest age group and argued against giving them additional protection. In March, another Post opinion called for limiting Social Security for affluent retirees, and last year its opinion pages complained that federal pc favoring older Americans while neglecting younger generations.

What all of this really reveals is a strong, consistent ageist bias at the Washi Post editorial board, beneath which resides a familiar subtext. From each ac to his abilities, to each according to his needs. The hidden subtext is a funda tenet of Marxist philosophy.

There is something deeply strange about this emerging redistributionist argu Much of the wealth held by older Americans exists precisely because they wor saved, invested, bought homes and contributed to retirement accounts for fort years. Of course a 70-year-old normally has more accumulated wealth than a 3 old. That is how a lifetime of saving is supposed to work. Yet the Post increasi treats the successful accumulation of retirement wealth almost as evidence of unfairness, and then uses that wealth to justify reducing the benefits those sar people spent their working lives paying for. This is redistribution by generatic than simply by income, with responsible saving eventually becoming the justi for taking more from those who saved. The Post is entitled to advocate that philosophy. It should at least acknowledge what it is doing, but perhaps that i: too much from this “progressive” narrative-enforcement engine, long charact “Pravda on the Potomac”.

Social Security and Medicare absolutely need reform. Pretending otherwise is irresponsible. The 2026 Trustees put Social Security’s combined 75-year actua deficit at 4.42 percent of taxable payroll, and the dates at which the trust fund: encounter serious financing problems are no longer safely buried in some dist future. Something will have to change, and pretending there is a painless solu more responsible than pretending there is no problem.

But there is an enormous difference between acknowledging that reality and c deciding who should pay for it. The federal government spent decades borrow Social Security surpluses. Congress ran enormous deficits under both parties. Washington tolerated, subsidized, and helped construct one of the most exper medical systems in the world. Politicians repeatedly refused to confront Socia Security and Medicare financing because doing so was politically unpleasant.

Now the bill has arrived, and the *Washington Post* editorial board has identifie problem.

Apparently, America’s retirees just have too much money, and what is needed dose of intergenerational wealth redistribution, ideally coupled to struggle se: the guilty elders. Now, please remind me, where have we seen this movie befo When the Washington Post editorial board clearly demonstrates their politica philosophical bias, you should believe them. By their actions, you will know tl

JGM/RWM

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Dr Linda Dr Linda Aug 25

Liked by Dr. Robert W. Malone

I am so sick of being robbed. I am equally sick of being treated like a moron.

The government is wasting the money, not me.

LIKED (119) REPLY

1 reply

DSB DSB Aug 25

Liked by Dr. Robert W. Malone

Not only did Social Security recipients pay into the fund, but so did their employers. Th share should be seen as wages deferred.

LIKED (94) REPLY

4 replies

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