

MITT ROMNEY: HUGE TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHIEST; WRONG ON MEDICARE FOR 3.4 MILLION FLORIDIANS

President Obama believes that Medicare is a sacred compact with our seniors who have earned their benefits after a lifetime of hard work. Today, 3.4 million Floridians rely on Medicare, and all of them deserve secure access to comprehensive health care. Since taking office the president has strengthened Medicare – eliminating gaps in coverage and extending the solvency of the program – and he has proposed new reforms that would put Medicare on even better financial footing.

Mitt Romney would weaken Florida's seniors' Medicare to help pay for his tax cuts for the wealthiest. The centerpiece of his campaign is a \$5 trillion tax plan that will give millionaires like Romney a 25-percent tax break. But paying for this tax plan will require higher deficits, higher middle-class taxes, or deep cuts to investments that strengthen the middle class, including education, clean energy, Social Security and Medicare.

Florida seniors can't afford Romney's dangerous plans to cut Medicare, which would require seniors to pay more:

- Romney would end Medicare as we know it and turn it into a voucher program. Independent experts have found that a similar plan would immediately raise seniors' costs by \$6,350 a year.
- Romney would force seniors on Medicare to pay more for their prescription drugs and preventive care. Every year, more than 200,000 Floridians fall into the prescription drug doughnut hole, and three in four people with Medicare get free preventive care. All of them would be forced to pay more under Romney's plan.
- Romney would repeal President Obama's reforms that have extended Medicare solvency by eight years – from 2016 to 2024 – by fighting fraud and abuse and trimming wasteful subsidies to insurance companies.

Romney Would End Medicare As We Know It to Help Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthiest

The centerpiece of Mitt Romney's economic plan is a proposal to provide – on top of the Bush tax cuts – \$5 trillion in additional tax breaks weighted toward the wealthy. Independent estimates find that Romney's plan would cut taxes for millionaires by 25 percent, even as it raises taxes on at least 18 million hardworking families. In fact, his tax cuts for the wealthy are so deep that experts say Romney's plan will lead to higher deficits, higher taxes for middle-class families or both. Romney refuses to ask the wealthiest Americans to pay their fair share again and refuses to raise even one dime of revenue from the wealthiest Americans under any circumstances – so the only way he can address our deficit challenges is with deep cuts to investments in the middle class and our seniors.

Health care costs have grown at an unsustainable rate over the last several decades, threatening Medicare's solvency. While there are promising signs that costs' growth have slowed in recent years, there is more work to do to keep Medicare strong. But rather than tackle the real problems with long-term solutions, Romney would simply shift costs to seniors. His plan looks like it saves money only

because it forces seniors to pay more to get the health care coverage they need and already paid for over a lifetime of hard work.

Romney's plan:

- **Ends Medicare as We Know It:** Medicare would be unrecognizable by 2022. Romney would radically transform the program by giving seniors a voucher to buy health care coverage from a private insurance company or traditional Medicare. But analysis of a similar proposal showed that those vouchers wouldn't be enough to cover health costs.
- **Charge Seniors More:** Romney has been clear that seniors might have to pay more to stay in traditional Medicare. He explains that under some circumstances, "the premiums charged by the government will have to be higher and seniors will have to pay the difference to enroll in the traditional Medicare option."
- **Seniors' Costs Grow over Time:** Romney has refused to name the value of his vouchers, but admitted that it would grow more slowly than health care costs. That means his shortsighted plan would, over time, raise seniors' health costs even more.

Because insurance companies have higher administrative costs and fewer economies of scale, it costs them up to 30 percent more to deliver the same care as traditional Medicare, according to an estimate by the independent, nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office. That means the only way Romney's plan can lower costs for taxpayers is by making seniors pay more. A similar proposal would increase senior's costs by \$6,350 a year, starting the very first year it was implemented.

Florida seniors can't afford these reckless plans. Today, 3.4 million Floridians – or 18 percent of the state's residents – rely on Medicare. Seniors and others approaching retirement have paid for and earned their Medicare benefits throughout their working life. Asking them to pay more but get less is irresponsible and wrong.

Romney Would Eliminate Obamacare's Benefits for Seniors

President Obama's health reforms are already helping seniors across Florida and the country, helping them save money and live healthier lives. Obamacare filled coverage gaps so Medicare can provide more comprehensive benefits. It also strengthened Medicare by eliminating wasteful spending, which will strengthen the program's solvency for future generations.

But Romney promises to repeal Obamacare on "day one," eliminating all of its benefits for seniors, like:

- **Savings on Prescription Drugs:** Seniors in the doughnut hole are paying less for their prescription drugs, and the doughnut hole will be closed by 2020. So far, 5.3 million people with Medicare have saved \$3.7 billion on their prescriptions – including \$247 million in Florida. Last year alone, 238,000 Floridians saved an average of about \$600 each. Romney would reopen the doughnut hole, forcing millions of seniors to pay hundreds of dollars more for their prescription drugs.

- **Free Preventive Care:** Medicare now covers recommended preventive care without any co-pays or deductibles, helping every senior live a healthier life. Last year, 33 million people with Medicare – including 2.6 million Floridians – got a free preventive service like lifesaving cancer screenings, immunizations and regular checkups. Romney would go back to charging seniors out of pocket for this kind of critical preventive care.
- **New Wellness Visits:** For the first time, seniors' coverage includes an annual wellness visit so they won't miss regular checkups because of their cost. Romney would eliminate this benefit.
- **Less Waste and Fraud:** Wasteful subsidies to insurance companies are a thing of the past. Obamacare is also cracking down on fraud and abuse, and making sure we spend our health care dollars more wisely. These reforms don't just save money for Medicare, they save money for seniors, too: the average person with Medicare is expected to save more than \$4,000 over a decade because of the health care law's Medicare reforms. Romney would repeal these changes, needlessly giving taxpayer subsidies to insurance companies and eliminating tools that help fight fraud.
- **Stronger Solvency:** The Medicare Trust Fund will remain solvent for eight more years, until 2024. But if Romney repeals Obamacare, the Medicare Trust Fund would be exhausted by 2016 – in just four years.

Seniors Can't Afford Romney's Plans

Seniors in Florida and across the country simply can't afford Romney's plans to end Medicare as we know it. They would lose valuable benefits, like savings on prescriptions drugs and free preventive care, and the Medicare Trust Fund would be exhausted by 2016. Tomorrow's retirees would find a Medicare program unrecognizable from the one in place today, and in its place find an insufficient voucher program that leaves them on their own to negotiate with private insurance companies or pay higher costs for the same lifesaving care seniors get today.