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HORRY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Horry County Seniors



A Growing Asset

older Americans. “The long march of people moving to the Myrtle Beach area -- mostly retirees from the Northeast – shows no signs of letting up in the near future”, according to a report this year by the Post and Courier newspaper.

For both long-time residents and for newcomers, what issues are most important to the growing Horry County senior population?

And as Democrats, what policies and solutions can we offer to address their needs?

For senior residents, after a lifetime of work, income security and health security are most important.

Guaranteeing income security for Horry seniors starts with Social Security. According to the Census, 43 percent of households in Horry County receive Social Security. And about one out of every four households receive retirement income other than Social Security. Some households receive both Social Security and private pensions. Any reduction in Social Security for these seniors would kick a leg out of their financial plans and must be guarded against and strongly opposed in Congress.

For other seniors, Social Security makes up their entire income. An estimated 20,000 Horry seniors fall into this category. Many of these seniors spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent or a mortgage, and have little left over for food, health care and other essentials.

Terminating Social Security would be a death-knell for these seniors. And in normal times should be an idea that is rejected out-of-hand.

But the action already taken by the Trump Administration to defer the collection of the Social

Driven largely by the baby boom generation, the rapidly growing senior population (Americans who are age 65 or older), is unprecedented in U.S. history, bringing challenges and opportunities to the economy and to our institutions.

In the next 40 years this population growth will truly constitute a demographic tidal wave. By the year 2060, we can expect the number of older Americans to nearly double, with the group’s share of the country’s total population rising to where nearly one of every four Americans is 65 years of age or older. The number of persons over age 85 will grow even faster. According to the US Census, the number of people ages 85 and older, although much smaller in size, is projected to nearly triple from 6.7 million in 2020 to 19.0 million by 2060.

Horry County, as a prime retirement community, will be at the center of the changes brought about by this increase in the senior population. The county is already a leading edge. Seniors aged 55 and older make up 37 percent of our population, in comparison to 28.9 percent statewide and 27 percent nationally, according to the Horry County Imagine 2040 project.

This county-wide planning project expects more than 275,000 new residents to move to Horry County before 2040. Past trends suggest that many if not most of these new residents will be

Security payroll taxes through the end of this year is already raising alarm bells. This threat to Social Security finances will be a crisis if a re-elected Trump pushes for the termination of the Social Security tax altogether, an idea the President advanced earlier this year.

Horry Democrats support the National Democratic Platform that seeks to secure a dignified retirement for everyone. Horry Democrats are committed to and believe strongly in the Platform statement: “Democrats will reject every effort to cut, privatize, or weaken Social Security, including attempts to raise the retirement age, diminish benefits by cutting cost-of-living adjustments, or reduce earned benefits. We will ensure Social Security will be there forever”.

Of equal concern is the federal budget plan the President proposed this year that seeks to reduce Medicare and Medicaid spending by almost \$1 trillion. If enacted, these cuts will further limit senior’s access to care and would come on top of South Carolina’s decision not to expand Medicaid even though the expansion would be largely paid for by the federal government. Democrats believe strongly that access to insurance coverage means access to care, and that helps keep people alive and healthier.

Seniors are a vibrant part of our Horry County community. While many are fully enjoying their golden years, some have difficulties in maintaining their independence because of a disability. Over 25,000 Horry seniors report a hearing, vision, cognitive, self-care or independent living difficulty that impacts their quality of life according to a Census Bureau survey conducted locally in Horry County.

That is why Horry Democrats support doubling investments in community health centers, rural health clinics, home health services and expanded transportation services so seniors can fully participate in the life of our county. Democrats will continue to press for the expansion of these important programs.

And we will stand guard against all attempts to reduce, walk-back or eliminate our Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs. These programs are part of our nation’s fabric and are essential for the health and well-being of millions of Americans and South Carolinians.



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