



HEATHER SCHREIBER'S

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Social Security Planning for Retirement

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Linking the Retirement Income Style Awareness® Tool with Social Security Claiming Decisions

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Join the Retirement Planning Conversation



Policy Shifts and Public Sentiment

The second Trump Administration has been highly active in its opening months. Much of the media coverage has focused on tariffs, immigration, and foreign aid. However, federal insurance programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are also expected to undergo meaningful changes, although these may emerge more slowly than the headline-grabbing issues typically prioritized early in a new administration. Regardless of political affiliation, Social Security and Medicare consistently remain top of mind for both working Americans and retirees.

Despite today's political polarization, Americans across party lines are more united than one might expect when it comes to these foundational programs. As we will explore later, a recent bipartisan study revealed a refreshing level of agreement among Americans of all ages, education levels, and political affiliations about their opinions on addressing Social Security's financing gap. Prepare to be surprised; I certainly was.

As political tensions mount, markets respond, and Americans continue to worry about being prepared for retirement, it is important to use tactical planning. It is imperative to gain clarity and confidence in the facts and then be prepared to engage proactively in conversations that educate, inform, and empower.

And while clients do not expect their financial advisors and CPAs to predict political outcomes or know the inner workings of federal agencies, they do look to them for interpretation on how policy changes might affect their retirement. Walking together during uncertain times, asking and answering the right questions, and creating a customized plan reinforces this pivotal relationship.

Although political discourse often generates more heat than clarity, not all coverage translates into immediate or meaningful change. It is essential to distinguish between media speculation and confirmed policy shifts that directly affect seniors. Some issues require a wait-and-see approach, but others, like recent changes to how an individual interacts with the SSA, are already reshaping the beneficiary's experience. Discussing tangible policy changes as they occur, while filtering out unconfirmed noise, allows the focus to be on what matters most: protecting financial security.

Overpayment Recovery Policy Reversal

In March 2024, then-Acting Commissioner, Martin O'Malley, responded to public backlash over aggressive overpayment recovery efforts stemming from an estimated \$20 billion in outstanding benefit overpayments by capping the

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