

Illinois Lawmakers Hold Town Hall Meeting to Discuss Bush's Social Security Proposal

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Hundreds of Chicagoans attended a town hall meeting Tuesday morning about President Bush's plan to overhaul Social Security. Illinois Democrats hosted the meeting at Loyola University. President Bush urges action but Democrats argue that there isn't need for drastic action.

Thirty years ago, Michael Grice was in a motorcycle accident. He has worked some over the years, but his Social Security benefits allow him to live independently.

"If I lose social security, I will not be able to keep my current living arrangement and be as independent as I'm capable of being," said Michael Grice, Social Security recipient.

Beryl Clemens also collects social security. She wants to protect it for future generations.

"When you have something good that's been working for almost 100 years, how ridiculous can

you be to want to change it because you want to get rids of something that Franklin Roosevelt thought of?" said Clemens.

Hundreds of people attended the town hall meeting on social security at Loyola University's water tower campus. Some of Illinois' lawmakers led the discussion.

"Today's workers, putting money into social security for current and future retirees with the promise that when they retire, it will be there to help them. And I believe that's essential now more than ever," said U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, (D).

The congressional budget office estimates that the money paid out to Social Security recipients will outpace what is being contributed to the Social Security fund in 2020. Around 2050, the government will have to reduce the benefits promised to recipients by about 25-percent.

Last month, President Bush proposed a Social Security plan in which some funds will be invested in the stock market. Democrats, including those at Tuesday's Town Hall meeting, have staunchly opposed that plan.

"There are a lot of things that we can do out there that have bipartisan support if we don't try to use it as a Trojan horse to wreck social security," said U.S. Senator Barack Obama

"I think the president declaring that there's been a crisis in social security has energized Americans of all ages, certainly persons with disabilities, those who rely on Social Security, are very worried about the changes that have been proposed," said U.S. Rep. Jan **Schakowsky**.

It's estimated that one in five Americans receive social security. All agree something needs to be done to protect that benefit, but there are varying degrees of proposed change. The Democrats at the town hall say the most important thing is that both Democrats and republicans work together on the solution.