

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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Cruz and Palmer Reintroduce Act to Allow Seniors to Opt-Out of Medicare Without Losing Social Security Benefits

Citizens' Council for Health Freedom is Leading the Charge with 41 Other Groups to Urge President Trump to Right This Health Care Wrong

ST. PAUL, Minn.—This past November, [Citizens' Council for Health Freedom \(CCHF\)](#) and 37 other respected organizations [urged President Donald Trump via a letter](#) to allow senior citizens to voluntarily opt-out of Medicare—without losing their Social Security benefits. Four more groups have recently signed on to the letter: Americans for Prosperity, Concerned Veterans for America, Practicing Physicians of America and Americans for Tax Reform.

Now, Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas), along with Sens. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Mike Lee (R-Utah), has reintroduced the Retirement Freedom Act ([S.1030](#)), a bill that will empower senior citizens and create more options and opportunities for health care, according to [Cruz's website](#). “This bill,” the senator reported, “would allow senior citizens the choice to opt-out of Medicare Part A and utilize other healthcare options without being forced to lose their Social Security benefits. Rep. Gary Palmer (R-Ala.) introduced [companion legislation](#) in the House of Representatives.”

In its Nov. 7 letter to the White House, **CCHF** called for a similar action, highlighting the fact that the current practice of the Social Security Administration (SSA) unlawfully prohibits an individual from receiving their Social Security benefits unless they enroll in Medicare Part A (hospitalization).

“This is neither a law or a rule,” said CCHF president and co-founder and award-winning author Twila Brase, “but rather a series of executive instructions added by previous administrations to the SSA Program Operations Manual System (POMS)—essentially a handbook for SSA employees. These instructions limit the options of senior citizens, leaving most of them stuck in Medicare, which is a voluntary entitlement program, even if they want to keep private coverage or keep private insurance as their primary coverage.”

Said Cruz, “The Retirement Freedom Act would empower our seniors with the power of choice by providing them with the freedom to choose healthcare that best suits their needs,” while Paul added, “Our Retirement Freedom Act gives seniors the ability to act in their own best interest without bureaucrats threatening to take away their Social Security. It is a reform grounded in freedom and a respect for the American people, and it’s a model for the changes we can make to strengthen our health care system moving forward.”

CCHF says it is pleased to see the legislation reintroduced, but notes that the Trump administration does not have to wait for the legislative process. President Trump could right this administrative wrong by simply requiring these executive instructions to be removed from the SSA handbook, which is what the groups have requested. Several benefits beyond freedom of choice for seniors include:

- Protection against a single-payer Medicare for All program
- Potential development of a market for lifelong private insurance
- Reduced Medicare expenditures, improving financial stability of the program for those choosing to stay in Medicare

“Making this change will have no impact on those who have enrolled, wish to stay enrolled or want to enroll in Medicare in the future,” Brase said. “It simply allows senior citizens to collect their rightful Social Security benefits without being required to enroll in, or remain enrolled in, Medicare Part A.”

In the past, Brase added, Americans could waive their Medicare benefits, if they wished, without losing their Social Security. In practice, few availed themselves of this option. Unfortunately, under present procedures, initiated by prior administrations without congressional approval, no one may receive Social Security benefits if they decline Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) benefits.

This leaves seniors with few coverage options today except Medicare because private insurers, as a general rule, decline to cover people who are enrolled in or eligible for Medicare. As a result, Medicare has become, for all practical purposes, the only medical coverage available to elderly Americans, even if they have other preferred coverage they could retain and they are willing to pay for.

“These procedures effectively trap seniors in Medicare, but you have the authority to liberate them,” the groups told President Trump.

Besides *CCHF*, co-signers of the letter included 60 Plus Association, American Family Association, Association of Mature American Citizens, Center for Medical Freedom, Competitive Enterprise Institute, Citizens Against Government Waste, Foundation for Economic Freedom, FreedomWorks, Galen Institute, Goldwater Institute, Independent Women’s Voice, The Heartland Institute, Texas Public Policy Institute and Washington Policy Center, among others.

Brase noted that FreedomWorks posted recent support for the legislation: [“Support the Retirement Freedom Act, H.R. 2108 and S 1030.”](#)

In the new book, ***“Big Brother in the Exam Room: The Dangerous Truth About Electronic Health Records,”*** which was recently named a first-place winner for the [Reader Views Literary Awards](#), Brase writes extensively about Medicare and other government coverage programs, socialized medicine, patient privacy, electronic health records, health freedom and how the Affordable Care Act has harmed patients and doctors since its 2010 enactment. Find ***“Big Brother in the Exam Room”*** online wherever books are sold or at [BigBrotherintheExamRoom.com](#).

Learn more about *CCHF* at [www.cchffreedom.org](#), its [Facebook](#) page or its Twitter feed @CCHFFreedom. Also view the [media page for CCHF here](#). For more about *CCHF’s* initiative ***The Wedge of Health Freedom***, visit [www.JointheWedge.com](#), ***The Wedge*** [Facebook](#) page or follow ***The Wedge*** on Twitter @wedgeoffreedom.

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