

## Comparing 2016 Party Platforms: Senior Issues

Issue	Democratic <a href="https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16-no-lines.pdf">https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16-no-lines.pdf</a>	Republican <a href="https://prod-static-ngop-pbl.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL[1]-ben_1468872234.pdf">https://prod-static-ngop-pbl.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL[1]-ben_1468872234.pdf</a>
<b>Social Security</b>	<p>“We will fight 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 reducing earned benefits. Democrats will expand Social Security so that every American can retire with dignity and respect, including women who are widowed or took time out of the workforce to care for their children, aging parents, or ailing family members....We will make sure Social Security’s guaranteed benefits continue for generations to come by asking those at the top to pay more, and will achieve this goal by taxing some of the income of people above \$250,000.”</p>	<p>“We accept the responsibility to preserve and modernize a system of retirement security forged in an old industrial era beyond the memory of most Americans. Current retirees and those close to retirement can be assured of their benefits. Of the many reforms being proposed, all options should be considered to preserve Social Security. As Republicans, we oppose tax increases and believe in the power of markets to create wealth and to help secure the future of our Social Security system.”</p>
<b>Universal Health Care/Medicare/Medicaid</b>	<p>“Americans should be able to access public coverage through a public option, and those over 55 should be able to opt in to Medicare. Democrats will empower the states, which are the true laboratories of democracy, to use innovation waivers under the ACA to develop unique locally tailored approaches to health coverage.... Democrats will keep costs down by making premiums more affordable, reducing out-of-pocket expenses, and capping prescription drug costs. And we will fight against insurers trying to impose excessive premium increases. Democrats will fight any attempts by Republicans in Congress to privatize, voucherize, or “phase out” Medicare as we know it. And we will oppose Republican plans to slash funding and block grant Medicaid and SNAP [Food Stamps], which would harm millions of Americans.</p> <p>We will keep fighting until the ACA’s Medicaid expansion has been adopted in every state. Nineteen states have not yet expanded Medicaid [including North Carolina]. This means that millions of low-income Americans still lack health insurance and are not getting the care they need. Additionally, health care providers, clinics, hospitals, and taxpayers are footing a higher bill when people without insurance visit expensive emergency rooms.”</p>	<p>“To preserve Medicare and Medicaid, the financing of these important programs must be brought under control before they consume most of the federal budget, including national defense. The good news is that it can be done, and it can be done without endangering the elderly and the needy who depend on those programs. We intend to save Medicare by modernizing it, empowering its participants, and putting it on a secure financial footing. We will preserve the promise of Medicaid as well by making that program, designed for 1965 medicine, a vehicle for good health in an entirely new era.</p> <p>....we propose these reforms: Impose no changes for persons 55 or older. Give others the option of traditional Medicare or transition to a premium-support model designed to strengthen patient choice, promote cost-saving competition among providers, and better guard against the fraud and abuse that now diverts billions of dollars every year away from patient care. Guarantee to every enrollee an income-adjusted contribution toward a plan of their choice, with catastrophic protection. Without disadvantaging present retirees or those nearing retirement, set a more realistic age for eligibility in light of today’s longer life span. Medicaid presents related, but somewhat different challenges. As the dominant force in the health market with regard to long-term care, births, and persons with mental illness, it is the next frontier of welfare reform. It is simply too big and too flawed to be administered from Washington. ... We applaud the Republican governors and state legislators who have undertaken the hard work of modernizing Medicaid. We will give them a free hand to do so by block-granting the program without strings. Block granting Medicaid is particularly needed to address mental health care. Using block grants would allow states to experiment with different systems to address mental health and develop successful models to be replicated in states across the nation.”</p>
<b>Prescription Drugs</b>	<p>“We will crack down on price gouging by drug companies and cap the amount Americans have to pay out-of-pocket every month on prescription drugs.... Democrats will also fight to make sure that Medicare will negotiate lower prices with drug manufacturers.”</p>	<p>Not specifically mentioned.</p>

Issue	Democratic	Republican
<b>Long Term Care</b>	“Our country faces a long-term care crisis that prevents too many seniors and people with disabilities from being able to live with dignity at home or in their communities. ... Programs that emphasize independence rather than institutionalization must be better structured to support them. Democrats will take steps to strengthen and expand the home care workforce, give seniors and people with disabilities access to quality, affordable long-term care, services, and supports, and ensure that all of these resources are readily available at home or in the community.”	“Our aging population must have access to safe and affordable care. Because most seniors desire to age at home, we will make homecare a priority in public policy and will implement programs to protect against elder abuse.”
<b>Family Caregiving</b>	“We will ensure that family caregivers have the support, respite care, and training they need to support their loved ones.... We will address the conditions that make it hard for workers with unpredictable or inflexible schedules to meet caregiving responsibilities.... We will increase investments to...support the millions of people paying for, coordinating, or providing care for aging relatives or those with disabilities.”	Not specifically mentioned.
<b>Pensions</b>	“Democrats believe it should be easier for Americans to save for retirement and prepare for unforeseen risks and expenses. We will defend the right of workers to collect their defined benefit pensions and make sure workers get priority and protection when pension plans are in distress. Democrats will also fight to enact legislation to make sure that the earned pension benefits of Americans will not be cut, and will pay for it by closing tax loopholes that benefit millionaires and billionaires. We will fight against any attempt ... to roll back the Conflict of Interest Rule, which requires that retirement advisors put the best interests of their clients above their own financial gain.”	Not specifically mentioned.
<b>Elder Abuse</b>	“We are also committed to fighting the immense problem of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.”	“we will make homecare a priority in public policy and will implement programs to protect against elder abuse.”
<b>Older Americans Act</b>	“We strongly support the Older Americans Act, which funds critical programs to help seniors remain independent in their own homes and communities.”	Not specifically mentioned.
<b>Disability Rights</b>	“We will protect and expand the right of Americans with disabilities to get the accommodations and support they need to live in integrated community settings. We will improve access to meaningful and gainful employment for people with disabilities. We will provide tax relief to help the millions of families caring for aging relatives or family members with chronic illnesses or disabilities.”	“We oppose the non-consensual withholding of care or treatment from people with disabilities, including newborns, the elderly, and infirm, just as we oppose euthanasia and assisted suicide, which endanger especially those on the margins of society. We urge the Drug Enforcement Administration to restore its ban on the use of controlled substances for physician-assisted suicide.”
<b>Voting Rights</b>	“We will bring our democracy into the 21st century by expanding early voting and vote-by-mail, implementing universal automatic voter registration and same day voter registration, ending partisan and racial gerrymandering, and making Election Day a national holiday. ...And we will continue to fight against discriminatory voter identification laws, which disproportionately burden young voters, diverse communities, people of color, low-income families, people with disabilities, the elderly, and women. We support fully funding the Help America Vote Act and will work to fulfill the promise of election reform, including fighting to end long lines at voting booths and ensuring that all registration materials, voting materials, polling places, and voting machines are truly accessible to seniors, Americans with disabilities, and citizens with limited English proficiency.”	“Honest elections are the foundation of representative government. We pledge to protect the voting rights of every citizen, as well as their rights of conscience when they are harassed or denied a job because of their contributions to a candidate or a cause. We support state efforts to ensure ballot access for the elderly, the handicapped, military personnel, and all legitimate voters. We urge state and local officials to take all appropriate steps to allow voters to cast their ballots in a timely manner. We are concerned, however, that some voting procedures may be open to abuse. For this reason, we support legislation to require proof of citizenship when registering to vote and secure photo ID when voting. We strongly oppose litigation against states exercising their sovereign authority to enact such laws. In addition, to guarantee that everyone’s vote is counted, we urge that electronic voting systems have a voter-verified paper audit trail.”