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AJR-3 Public social services: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. (2025-2026)

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Assembly Joint Resolution No. 3

CHAPTER 168

Relative to public social services.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 05, 2025.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 3, Schiavo. Public social services: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

This measure would call on the state's Representatives in Congress to support legislation to repeal all of the provisions of the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act that adversely affect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs, to oppose privatization of these programs, and to protect and improve these programs, and would call on the President of the United States to immediately restore program staffing levels, to work with Congress to protect and improve these programs, and to disavow any efforts to privatize Social Security.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are the foundation of the income and health security of older Americans, younger Americans with permanent and severe disabilities, American families that have lost breadwinners, and those whose economic circumstances preclude them from purchasing health insurance in the private market; and

WHEREAS, Social Security is our nation's most important source of retirement income, disability insurance, and life insurance; and

WHEREAS, Social Security and Medicare are the foundations of income and health security for older Californians and those with severe work disabilities, providing monthly cash benefits and health insurance to over 6,000,000 residents; and

WHEREAS, Social Security is the single most important source of life insurance for California's children, which currently provides a virtually guaranteed income to over 300,000 children throughout our state; and

WHEREAS, Social Security prevents more than 1,400,000 Californians 65 years of age and older from living in poverty and lessens the depth of poverty for millions more; and

WHEREAS, Social Security benefits annually contribute over \$100 billion to our state's economy; and

WHEREAS, Social Security provides benefits to nearly 8,000,000 veterans nationwide; and

WHEREAS, Social Security's benefits leave over 10 percent of beneficiaries below the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, Our nation is facing a retirement income crisis as the result of the decline of traditional pensions, the failure of 401(k) accounts, and the stagnation or even decline in many areas of home equity and earnings, all of which have caused many workers

to fear that they will never be able to retire and maintain their standard of living; and

WHEREAS, One-half of elderly Californians are struggling to make ends meet and most working Californians will not have saved enough to be able to maintain their standard of living in retirement; and

WHEREAS, Improving Social Security benefits is essential to alleviating poverty, which endangers seniors more than any other age group; and

WHEREAS, Social Security's funding is independent of that of the rest of the federal government, and does not, and by law cannot, contribute to the federal deficit; and

WHEREAS, The costs of administering Social Security benefits are extremely low, having declined from 2.3 percent in 1958 to 1 percent or less since 1989; and

WHEREAS, For the past three years, the costs of administering Social Security benefits have remained at 0.5 percent, an amount that is inadequate to properly administer the nearly \$1.5 trillion in benefits paid annually to nearly 70 million beneficiaries: retirees and their dependents, disabled workers and their dependents, and survivors of deceased workers; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Government Efficiency cut 7,000 Social Security Administration staff, or 12 percent of its workforce, resulting in the agency having the fewest employees it has had since 1967 when it served 480 beneficiaries for every staff member. The agency will now be attempting to serve 1,480 beneficiaries for every staff member; and

WHEREAS, Social Security had a surplus of \$2.7 trillion at the end of 2024; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the enactment of the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1), Social Security had sufficient resources to meet all of its obligations through 2033 and has dedicated revenues that would meet more than 80 percent of promised benefits thereafter; and

WHEREAS, The tax cuts and other policies of H.R. 1 are projected to cause Social Security's Trust Fund to be depleted two years sooner than currently projected; and

WHEREAS, The loss in staff has already resulted in serious delays in benefit delivery and caused widespread anxiety among current and future beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 14247, issued March 25, 2025, and effective on September 30, 2025, halts the issuance of physical Social Security checks, which will result in unnecessary hardship for hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries who are unbanked or for other reasons require paper checks; and

WHEREAS, If Social Security does not have sufficient resources to meet its obligations, the number of Social Security beneficiaries living in poverty would increase by over 50 percent; and

WHEREAS, Eliminating the cap on income subject to Social Security contributions and requiring the wealthy to pay their fair share would assure that Social Security will have sufficient resources to meet its obligations for the foreseeable future and, indeed, even increase Social Security's modest benefits, and recent polling shows that 71 percent of Americans support increasing taxes on wealthy Americans to protect Social Security; and

WHEREAS, Recent polling shows that the vast majority (72 percent) of the public, including 59 percent of Republicans, oppose the privatization of Social Security; and

WHEREAS, Medicare has provided health care to those over 65 years of age since 1965 and to those with disabilities since 1972; and

WHEREAS, Medicare insures seniors and people with disabilities, who represent, on average, the part of our population with the highest health care costs, at a fraction of the administrative costs of private health care plans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare has controlled its costs of care better than private insurance plans; and

WHEREAS, Medicare's benefit design and Congress's failure to expand traditional Medicare is pushing increasing numbers of seniors into private Medicare plans where they face limited choices of doctors and hospitals and prior authorization restricting access to health care; and

WHEREAS, The private Medicare plans' health care restrictions drive beneficiaries to switch to traditional Medicare when their health care needs increase, particularly during the last year of their lives; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of H.R. 1 will result in increased health care insecurity and costs for seniors and disabled beneficiaries and reduce the ability of our government to contain our nation's overall health care expenditures, which currently

equal 17.6 percent of our gross domestic product, by far the highest relative cost of any industrialized nation, while the European Union's costs are about 8 percent; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid is our nation's most important source of long-term care for seniors and people with disabilities and health care for low-income Americans, providing primary care, dental care, vision care, mental health care, and substance use disorder services to over 72,000,000 people nationwide; and

WHEREAS, Expanded Medicaid coverage for Californians as a result of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act significantly reduced California's uninsured population and provided increased access to primary and preventive health care, making families healthier; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid provides health care coverage to nearly 15,000,000 Californians whose economic circumstances preclude them from participating in the private health care insurance system, yet they need and deserve medical treatment as much as any American in better economic circumstances; and

WHEREAS, Under H.R. 1, a portion of the over 823,000 seniors and people with disabilities who rely on Medi-Cal home care benefits (In-Home Supportive Services) for help staying healthy at home could instead be forced into costly institutions; and

WHEREAS, Working families rely on the In-Home Supportive Services Program for care, as nearly one in five of all California workers, and as many as one in three workers in the agricultural and restaurant industries, are enrolled in Medi-Cal; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of H.R. 1 that limit federal Medicaid funding to the states threaten to severely limit Medicaid's ability to provide adequate health care coverage to the most vulnerable among us; and

WHEREAS, The California Health and Human Services Agency has already determined that, among other consequences, H.R. 1's work requirements may result in up to 3 million Medi-Cal members losing coverage in 2027, and that another 400,000 may lose coverage due to new requirements for redetermining eligibility; and

WHEREAS, Our Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid systems are fundamental to protecting against risks to which all Californians are subject; and

WHEREAS, Our Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid systems give expression to widely held values, including caring for our families, our neighbors, and ourselves, personal responsibility, hard work, and personal dignity; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature calls on our state's Representatives in Congress to support legislation to repeal all of the provisions of H.R. 1 that adversely affect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid programs, to oppose any further attempts to cut or privatize them, as well as to support legislation to protect and improve them; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls on the President of the United States to honor his campaign promise not to cut these programs, and support legislation to repeal the provisions of H.R. 1 that cut these programs, and not to defund them, by immediately restoring program staffing levels, and by, among other actions, rescinding his executive order halting Social Security payments by paper checks, by personally and publicly disavowing any efforts to privatize Social Security, and by working with Congress to protect and improve these programs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.