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NEWS from Congressman CHARLES W. WHALEN, Jr.

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68-168A
October 29, 1968

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT

Congressman Charles W. Whalen, Jr. (R-Ohio) today proposed a cost of living increase provision for Social Security recipients along with four other proposals for the program.

He predicted that the issue would come before the next Congress because of interest expressed by the two leading Presidential candidates as well as other Congressmen.

Whalen made the comments in a statement released today.

He said the current limitation on allowable earnings also must be increased and ultimately eliminated and widow benefits raised from 82 to a full 100 per cent.

In addition, Whalen called for restoration of the 100 per cent income tax reduction for non-reimbursable drugs and medical expenses for those over age 65 and the extension of Social Security coverage for all older people with a gradual extension in universal coverage downward from age 72 to 65.

"To provide for an increase in benefits and then allow it to be consumed by increases in the cost of living is to do only half the job," Whalen declared.

He said the changes are needed to make Social Security effective and will enhance "the ability of retired persons to meet their living expenses, particularly those who depend upon Social Security exclusively."

Whalen described Social Security benefits as "hardly lavish."

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A copy of an excerpt of Congressman Whalen's remarks is enclosed for your information.

STATEMENT BY CONGRESSMAN CHARLES W. WHALEN, JR., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1968,
DAYTON, OHIO

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Although the 90th Congress did enact significant Social Security legislation, I believe additional improvements need to be made.

I have no doubt that this question will come before the 91st Congress. I know that many Congressmen agree with me on the necessity for further changes. In addition, the two major Presidential candidates have expressed an intense interest in this subject.

There are five specific proposals I consider worthy of consideration. They are:

1. An automatic cost of living increase in Social Security and railroad retirement benefits.

2. The current limitation on allowable earnings also must be increased and ultimately eliminated.

3. Widow benefits should be raised from the present level of 82 per cent to a full 100 per cent of the late husband's pension.

4. The 100 per cent income tax reduction for non-reimbursable drugs and medical expenses for those over age 65 should be restored.

5. Social Security coverage should be expanded to include all of our older citizens with a gradual extension in universal coverage downward from 72 to 65.

The first three points require little justification. They have been debated extensively in the past. The cost of living allowance provision is mandatory if the intent of Social Security is to be carried out. To provide for an increase in benefits and then allow it to be consumed by increases in the cost of living is to do only half the job. The present ceiling on allowable income discourages incentive and productivity from our senior citizens and penalizes them for showing initiative.

All five points relate directly to making Social Security effective. The benefits provided by the program are hardly lavish. These proposed improvements will contribute significantly to the ability of retired persons to meet their living expenses, particularly those who depend upon Social Security exclusively.

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