



## The Social Security Benefits of Sitting Senators

BY DEAN BAKER AND KRIS WARNER\*

In November, Colorado Senator Michael Bennet was interviewed on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition* by Renee Montagne.<sup>1</sup> In the course of the interview, Senator Bennet told Ms. Montagne that, as a 45-year old, he would get no Social Security benefit if the program is not fixed.

This is not true. According to the most recent projections from the Social Security trustees, Mr. Bennet should expect to see a benefit of \$37,429 a year (in 2010 dollars), if he retires at age 67 in 2031.

Social Security trustees' projections show that the program would face a shortfall beginning in 2037. If the projections prove accurate, and Congress never makes any changes to the program, then Social Security is projected to be able to pay almost 80 percent of scheduled benefits in subsequent years. This means that Mr. Bennet would be able to anticipate a benefit of \$28,071 in 2038 and subsequent years. In other words, the projections show Mr. Bennet can expect to get a substantial benefit from Social Security as long as he lives.

CEPR has prepared a table, below, showing the scheduled Social Security benefit for each member of the Senate. It also shows the payable benefit, assuming that the projections for the program prove accurate, and Congress never makes any changes to Social Security. (It has made numerous changes in prior decades.)

This table is intended to help the Senators in preparing their personal finances. It should also help to inform them in making decisions about the future of the program. And, hopefully it will prevent them from misleading the public as Senator Bennet did.

**Center for Economic and  
Policy Research**  
1611 Connecticut Ave, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20009  
tel: 202-293-5380  
fax: 202-588-1356  
[www.cepr.net](http://www.cepr.net)

\*Dean Baker is an economist and Co-Director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C. Kris Warner is a Program Assistant at CEPR.

**Senators' Annual Social Security Benefits (2010 dollars)**

State	Senator	Year of NRA*	Benefits up to 2037	Benefits after 2037	State	Senator	Year of NRA*	Benefits up to 2037	Benefits after 2037
AL	Richard Shelby	1999	21,674	16,255	MT	Max Baucus	2006	26,845	20,134
AL	Jeff Sessions	2012	28,755	21,566	MT	Jon Tester	2022	33,602	25,201
AK	Lisa Murkowski	2023	34,083	25,562	NE	Ben Nelson	2006	26,845	20,134
AK	Mark Begich	2029	36,598	27,449	NE	Mike Johanns	2016	30,491	22,868
AZ	John McCain	2001	22,854	17,140	NV	Harry Reid	2004	25,432	19,074
AZ	Jon Kyl	2007	26,653	19,989	NV	John Ensign	2024	34,565	25,923
AR	John Boozman	2016	30,491	22,868	NH	Kelly Ayotte	2035	39,199	29,399
AR	Mark Pryor	2030	36,986	27,740	NH	Jeanne Shaheen	2013	29,154	21,866
CA	Dianne Feinstein	1998	21,641	16,231	NJ	Frank Lautenberg	1989	18,873	14,155
CA	Barbara Boxer	2005	26,131	19,598	NJ	Robert Menendez	2020	32,639	24,479
CO	Mark Udall	2016	30,491	22,868	NM	Jeff Bingama	2009	28,317	21,238
CO	Michael Bennet	2031	37,429	28,071	NM	Tom Udall	2014	29,554	22,166
CT	Richard Blumenthal	2012	28,755	21,566	NY	Charles Schumer	2016	30,491	22,868
CT	Joseph Lieberman	2007	26,653	19,989	NY	Kirsten Gillibrand	2033	38,314	28,735
DE	Thomas Carper	2013	29,154	21,866	NC	Richard Burr	2021	33,120	24,840
DE	Chris Coons	2030	36,986	27,740	NC	Kay Hagan	2019	32,102	24,077
FL	Bill Nelson	2007	26,653	19,989	ND	Kent Conrad	2014	29,554	22,166
FL	Marco Rubio	2038	N/A	30,484	ND	John Hoeven	2023	34,083	25,562
GA	Saxby Chambliss	2009	28,317	21,238	OH	Rob Portman	2021	33,120	24,840
GA	Johnny Isakson	2010	27,955	20,966	OH	Sherrod Brown	2018	31,565	23,674
HI	Daniel Inouye	1989	18,873	14,155	OK	James Inhofe	1999	21,674	16,255
HI	Daniel Akaka	1989	18,873	14,155	OK	Tom Coburn	2014	29,554	22,166
ID	Mike Crapo	2017	31,028	23,271	OR	Ron Wyden	2015	29,954	22,466
ID	Jim Risch	2009	28,317	21,238	OR	Jeff Merkley	2022	33,602	25,201
IL	Richard Durbin	2010	27,955	20,966	PA	Pat Toomey	2028	36,210	27,158
IL	Mark Kirk	2025	35,046	26,285	PA	Robert Casey Jr.	2027	35,822	26,867
IN	Richard Lugar	1997	21,700	16,275	RI	Jack Reed	2015	29,954	22,466
IN	Dan Coats	2009	28,317	21,238	RI	Sheldon Whitehouse	2021	33,120	24,840
IA	Charles Grassley	1998	21,641	16,231	SC	Lindsey Graham	2021	33,120	24,840
IA	Tom Harkin	2004	25,432	19,074	SC	Jim DeMint	2017	31,028	23,271
KS	Jerry Moran	2020	32,639	24,479	SD	Tim Johnson	2012	28,755	21,566
KS	Pat Roberts	2001	22,854	17,140	SD	John Thune	2028	36,210	27,158
KY	Mitch McConnell	2007	26,653	19,989	TN	Lamar Alexander	2005	26,131	19,598
KY	Rand Paul	2030	36,986	27,740	TN	Bob Corker	2018	31,565	23,674
LA	Mary Landrieu	2021	33,120	24,840	TX	Kay Bailey Hutchison	2009	28,317	21,238
LA	David Vitter	2028	36,210	27,158	TX	John Cornyn	2018	31,565	23,674
ME	Olympia Snowe	2013	29,154	21,866	UT	Orrin Hatch	1999	21,674	16,255
ME	Susan Collins	2018	31,565	23,674	UT	Mike Lee	2038	N/A	30,484
MD	Barbara Mikulski	2001	22,854	17,140	VT	Patrick Leahy	2005	26,131	19,598
MD	Benjamin Cardin	2009	28,317	21,238	VT	Bernard Sanders	2006	26,845	20,134
MA	John Kerry	2009	28,317	21,238	VA	Jim Webb	2012	28,755	21,566
MA	Scott Brown	2025	35,046	26,285	VA	Mark Warner	2020	32,639	24,479
MI	Carl Levin	1999	21,674	16,255	WA	Patty Murray	2016	30,491	22,868
MI	Debbie Stabenow	2016	30,491	22,868	WA	Maria Cantwell	2024	34,565	25,923
MN	Amy Klobuchar	2027	35,822	26,867	WV	John Rockefeller IV	2002	24,301	18,225
MN	Al Franken	2017	31,028	23,271	WV	Joe Manchin	2013	29,154	21,866
MS	Thad Cochran	2002	24,301	18,225	WI	Herbert Kohl	2000	21,880	16,410
MS	Roger Wicker	2017	31,028	23,271	WI	Ron Johnson	2021	33,120	24,840
MO	Roy Blunt	2016	30,491	22,868	WY	Michael Enzi	2010	27,955	20,966
MO	Claire McCaskill	2019	32,102	24,077	WY	John Barrasso	2018	31,565	23,674

Notes: Annual benefits above are the maximum that Social Security will pay (it is assumed that Senators' career earnings qualify them for this) for the year in which a Senator reaches the NRA, from Social Security Trustees Reports (projected where appropriate); 100% maximum annual benefits up to 2037, and 75% thereafter. \*NRA is the normal retirement age.

1 National Public Radio. 2010. "Colorado's Sen. Bennet On His Narrow Election Win." Morning Edition, Transcript of Interview of Michael Bennet by Renee Montagne. November 9. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=131181595>