

## LARSON AND SOUTH WINDSOR SENIORS DISCUSS LATEST LEGISLATIVE ACTION IN CONGRESS

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SOUTH WINDSOR ¶ In an effort to educate seniors in the First Congressional District about the recent changes made to the Social Security program, U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today met with seniors at the South Windsor Community Center.

On March 1, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 5, the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act, which would eliminate the earnings test for Social Security beneficiaries between the ages of 65 and 69. Larson voted to support the bill. According to the Social Security Administration, 15,746 people in Connecticut will benefit from the passage of H.R. 5.

Larson stated, ¶The repeal of the Social Security earnings limit is long overdue. Our many advances in science and medicine have enabled people to live longer than they did in the 1930s when the earnings limit originated. It's time we stopped punishing seniors for participating in the workforce. Their valuable skills and lifetime of expertise belong in the workplace.¶

Under the current law, seniors who claim Social Security benefits before they reach age 69 are subject to a reduction in benefits if they continue to work. For seniors 65 to 69, benefits are reduced by \$1 for every \$3 that their earnings exceed the limit. - \$17,000 in 2000, rising to \$30,000 in 2002 and indexed after that level. H.R. 5 would repeal this limit entirely, effective immediately. The bill is awaiting action in the Senate.

Larson told the South Windsor seniors that he believes it is important to consider H.R. 5 as a part of a broader plan ¶ one that uses the opportunity of a surplus to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt.

On February 29, the Administration's National Economic Council and Domestic Policy Council released a state-by-state report on the status of Medicare. Among the findings, it states that enrollment in the program will double over the next 30 years (from 39 to 80 million beneficiaries). In Connecticut, 456,000 seniors rely on Medicare.

Larson will host a forum on Medicare for all seniors in the First Congressional District on Monday, March 27 at the West Hartford Town Hall Auditorium from 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

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