



## **THE HOUSE REPUBLICANS' SHELL GAME ON SOCIAL SECURITY**

***It's just Another Scheme to Privatize Social Security and Fails to Do Anything on Solvency.***

**Baltimore Sun:** "Congress last week came up with the worst plan yet: Do nothing to fix Social Security's shortfall, while diverting its surpluses - until they peter out in 2017 - to private accounts. If the goal here is to get the camel's nose under the tent, the cost would be high, the loss of \$600 billion in surpluses that likely would be used to reduce federal budget deficits. And get this: It is being sold as a sort of 'lock box' to prevent Social Security revenue from being drained off by federal deficit spending - a fantastic turn for the party whose irresponsible tax cuts and spending have led this nation in just five years from surpluses to record red ink." [Editorial, 6/26/05]

**Minneapolis Star Tribune:** "In a desperate effort to rejuvenate support for privatizing Social Security, a group of congressional Republicans [last] week announced a new plan to create private retirement accounts using the program's temporary revenue surpluses. The plan is so weird and ill-conceived that it wouldn't merit comment, except that prominent GOP lawmakers have rallied around it in a way that perpetuates all the misconceptions about Social Security and creates new risks to its future." [Editorial, 6/23/05]

**Roanoke Times and World News:** "The plan could save some face for Bush - who has witnessed an evaporation of public support for private accounts in almost direct proportion to his effort to sell them. But the proposal would do nothing to improve the long-term solvency of Social Security. Nor would it provide much of a private nest egg for future retirees. The hypocrisy of the proposal, though, is what stuns. Republicans touting the plan say it will stop the 'raid' of the Social Security trust fund. But if they wish to identify those perpetuating that 'raid' for the last four years, they need only look in a very large mirror." [Editorial, 6/24/05]

**Atlanta Journal-Constitution:** "Congressional Republicans keep beating a dead horse --- President Bush's misguided proposal to transform Social Security from a safety net to a risky bet on the stock market through personal savings accounts... It's past time for the president, as well as congressional supporters, to give up on a bad idea. Carving private accounts out of the current Social Security surplus, as House Republicans proposed, is not the answer. It will weaken --- rather than strengthen --- Social Security." [Editorial, 6/23/05]

**USA Today:** "With support for individual Social Security accounts flagging, Congressional Republicans made a strategic adjustment Wednesday, just in time for Fourth of July parades and picnics back home. Their new plan follows the foot-in-the-door approach used in passing tax cuts in recent years: Sell it as temporary idea but then extend it once it is in place... for every one part substance, the plan contains nine parts gimmick. It's designed to sell the public on private accounts now — by linking them to people's worries over how the Social Security surplus is being used — and puts off until later the hard questions that plague the program." [Editorial, 6/22/05]

**New York Times:** "Rather than accept defeat and consider alternatives, Mr. Bush is becoming even more feckless as public and political opposition mounts...A group of four Republican representatives have meanwhile offered a proposal that would, in effect, abandon efforts to restore solvency in order to resuscitate those doomed, unwanted, unwise private accounts. Enough is enough." [Editorial, 6/23/05]

**Washington Post:** "What's really taking place is a gamble that these accounts, once introduced, can be expanded and made permanent -- that the accounts would continue even after the Social Security system moves into deficit. But proponents of personal accounts carved out of payroll taxes ought to be able to sell that notion to the public on the merits. If they can't -- and right now it looks that way -- the program shouldn't be introduced through the back door... Proposing a personal-account plan without any accompanying measure to improve Social Security's long-term solvency seems more like evidence of continuing lack of fiscal discipline." [Editorial, 6/27/05]