

Many seniors in our community struggle month to month to make ends meet on budgets that just can't cover today's high cost of living. Today's troubled economy is leaving the elderly in a financial pinch, particularly since a large majority of senior citizens rely on Social Security benefits as their main source of income.

As it was announced today, there will not be a Cost of Living Adjustment, or COLA, applied to Social Security benefits for 2011, which may cause great concern for senior citizens and those who care for them. This will leave the over 100,000 San Antonians who receive a Social Security check each month without an increase.

Since it was first signed into law 75 years ago, Social Security has kept tens of millions of senior citizens and disabled Americans of all ages out of poverty and ensured that they could live dignified and independent lives. I believe that the COLA is an essential part of Social Security that must be calculated accurately. That is why I am fighting to protect seniors by introducing the [Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act of 2009](#). This bipartisan bill, which already has 25 co-sponsors and is awaiting Committee action, would give our seniors a Social Security COLA that actually reflects their cost of living.

We must provide the basic benefits that our seniors count on, regardless of the ups and downs of the economy. In addition to my legislative proposal, I will be co-sponsoring Congressman Earl Pomeroy's *Seniors Protection Act*, which would provide a \$250 payment to help beneficiaries cover rising costs of Medicare, prescription drugs, and other necessities. The House of Representative will take up this vote as soon as we are back in session. We will act quickly to enact the one-time payment to seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities who receive Social Security to help them make ends meet during this tough time. The President has already budgeted for this and we can do this in a fiscally responsible way. This payment will assist about 54 million vulnerable individuals nationwide. However, this is just a short term solution to the lack of COLA. I will continue to fight to make sure that Congress passes a long-term solution to the manner in which the COLA is calculated.

Social Security is one of the foundations of our nation and it is based on the principle that if you work hard and play by the rules you will have the stability and security of guaranteed income in your older years. For 75 years, Social Security has been a critical safety net for our nation's seniors and it should be preserved for generations to come. For these reasons, I will keep fighting to provide an accurate measure of inflation for our senior citizens and to strengthen the program.

