

Senate Resolution 625

By: Senators Orrock of the 36th, Fort of the 39th, Butler of the 55th, James of the 35th, Seay of the 34th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Supporting the strengthening of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid; and for other
2 purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Social Security and Medicare are the foundation of the income and health
4 security of over 1.5 million elderly, disabled, and youth in Georgia, including 950,000
5 retirees, 260,000 disabled workers, and 139,000 children, and provides benefits to more than
6 9.2 million, or four out of every ten, veterans; and

7 WHEREAS, Social Security prevents 511,000 Georgians from living in poverty and
8 contributes nearly \$20.2 billion to Georgia's economy annually by paying benefits to over
9 1.5 million residents in the state and is vital in the expression of widely held values,
10 including caring for our families, our neighbors, and ourselves, personal responsibility, hard
11 work, and dignity; and

12 WHEREAS, Social Security's funding is independent of that of the rest of the federal
13 government and has never contributed to and by law can never contribute to the federal
14 deficit; and

15 WHEREAS, Social Security in fact has a surplus of \$2.7 trillion today that is expected to
16 grow to \$3.1 trillion by 2020, demonstrating that it is not in crisis and has sufficient resources
17 to meet all its obligations through 2032; and, further, in the absence of congressional
18 reforms, Social Security has dedicated revenues that would meet three-quarters of promised
19 benefits thereafter, and its shortfall after 2032 is modest, about half cost of the Bush tax cuts
20 of 2001 and 2003; and

21 WHEREAS, there are many policy options available to close Social Security's funding
22 shortfall without cutting benefits, such as eliminating the cap on earnings subject to the
23 payroll tax, which would eliminate about 80 percent of the 75 year shortfall, or raising the
24 payroll tax rate from 6.2 to 7.2 percent gradually over 20 years, which would eliminate half

25 the shortfall and is a solution preferred by Americans at a margin of 82 percent to 18 percent;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, Social Security's modest benefits to Georgians, averaging just \$13,263 annually,
28 are critical to the economic security of those who receive them, especially in the face of
29 pension loss and 401(k) balances, home equity, and earnings that have greatly diminished
30 the retirement income prospects of Georgians; and

31 WHEREAS, the Social Security benefit cuts imposed in 1983 and rising Medicare premiums
32 will cut benefits 18 percent for the average earner by 2030, while proposals to increase the
33 Social Security retirement age to 69 would force an additional 13 percent cut on top of the
34 13 percent cut levied with the previous age increase from 65 to 67; and

35 WHEREAS, the proposal to cut Social Security's annual cost-of-living adjustment by
36 switching to the chained Consumer Price Index would reduce benefits more each year a
37 person receives them, providing the greatest impact in old age, when benefits are most
38 needed, and is less accurate for seniors and people with disabilities who spend more of their
39 income on necessities like health care; and

40 WHEREAS, Social Security belongs to the people who have worked hard their entire lives
41 contributing to a program that promises to protect and provide for you and your family in the
42 event of retirement, severe disability, or death.

43 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
44 join in supporting the strengthening of Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid and request
45 that the President and the Congress of the United States exclude Social Security, Medicare,
46 and Medicaid from being part of any legislation to reduce the federal deficit.

47 BE FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to
48 transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the United States Congress.