

The New York Times

## The Conscience of a Liberal

Paul Krugman

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### Orwell And Social Security

I have to say, after Bush's Social Security scheme collapsed five years ago, I never thought I'd be back over the same old ground so soon.

But Social Security is actually a key testing ground — it's the place where you really see what people are after, and also get a sense of whether they're at all honest about what they're trying to do.

So: Pat Toomey supports replacing much of Social Security with a system of private accounts, but [denies that this is privatization](#) — and denounces those who use the term:

I've never said I favor privatizing Social Security. It's a very misleading — it's an intentionally misleading term. And it is used by those who try to use it as a pejorative to scare people

Oh, my. Back in the 1990s the Cato Institute had something called The Project on Social Security Privatization, which issued papers like this one from Martin Feldstein:

[Privatizing Social Security: The \\$10 Trillion Opportunity.](#)

Then the right discovered that “privatization” polled badly. And suddenly, the term was a liberal plot — hey, we never said we'd do that.

Wait, it gets worse: Cato not only renamed its project, but it went back through the web site, trying to purge references to privatization. Bush also tried to deny that he had ever used the word. [More here.](#)

And here we go again. So remember who originally called privatization privatization: the privatizers, that's who.

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