

National Review Online Blogger Calls Medicare A "Soviet-Style System"

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In a *National Review Online* blog post, Cato Institute director of tax policy studies Chris Edwards cheered the portion of Rep. Paul Ryan's (R-WI) budget plan that **guts Medicare** and replaces it with a system **resembling** government-provided vouchers for private insurance.

But Edwards, unlike some of his conservative colleagues, who have called Ryan's budget a plan to "**save Medicare**," Edwards attacks the entire current Medicare program as a "Soviet-style system."

Finally, a little truth-telling from the right, which has had its **target set on** Medicare since the program was **first being debated**.

From *National Review Online*:

As Congress continues to battle over this year's budget, House Budget chairman Paul Ryan released a blueprint today to guide Republican fiscal policies for years to come. Ryan's budget proposes spending cuts, tax reforms, and the restructuring of entitlement programs.

His plan will dominate budget discussions for the rest of the year, and it will help frame the fiscal debate for the 2012 presidential campaign. That's why liberal pundits are already attacking it with gusto. In the *Washington Post*, E. J. Dionne called Ryan's plan "radical," "irresponsible," and "extreme." But serious fiscal experts know that the real extreme plan is President Obama's "do nothing" budget, which would result in disastrous levels of debt and crushing tax burdens on families in coming years.

As a first step toward budget sanity, Ryan proposes further cuts to discretionary spending beyond those currently being debated. However, his main focus is on transforming the so-called entitlements. He would transition Medicare from the current Soviet-style system to one based on consumer choice. Instead of a system based on payments to health-care providers, new **retirees** would receive a "premium support" payment to buy a private insurance plan of their own choosing.

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