

**SURVEY OF REGISTERED VOTERS 55 AND OLDER
REGARDING SOCIAL SECURITY REFORM**

MARCH 6-8, 2005

Hello, may I please speak with Mr./Ms. _____ Mr./Ms. _____, this is _____ with Ayres, McHenry & Associates, a public opinion research company. We're talking with people today for just a few minutes about some issues facing the country. We are not trying to sell anything, your answers are completely confidential, and we would really appreciate your cooperation (DO NOT PAUSE).

A. Are you 55 or older?

YES, 55 OR OLDER GO TO QUESTION B
 NO, YOUNGER THAN 55..... THANK AND CLOSE
 REFUSED..... THANK AND CLOSE

B. Are you registered to vote in the county in which you live?

YES GO TO QUESTION 1
 NO..... THANK AND CLOSE

I would like to begin with several questions about saving for retirement.

1. As a general rule, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to allow people to put money into a personal retirement account on which they do not pay taxes?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
GOOD IDEA.....	58%	57%	60%
BAD IDEA.....	28%	28%	28%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	14%	14%	13%

2. Who do you trust more to manage your retirement savings accounts (ROTATE: you yourself, or the federal government)?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
YOU YOURSELF.....	74%	72%	76%
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.....	17%	18%	16%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	9%	10%	8%

Now I have several questions about the current Social Security system.

3. Are you currently receiving Social Security benefits?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
YES.....	69%	73%	65%
NO.....	31%	27%	35%
REFUSED.....	0%	0%	0%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

4. Do you have a retirement plan other than Social Security, like an employer pension plan, a union pension plan, or an IRA?

IF YES, ASK: As far as you know, is part of that retirement plan invested in bond or stock funds?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
YES/INVESTED	53%	56%	49%
YES/NOT INVESTED.....	11%	13%	9%
YES/DON'T KNOW.....	10%	10%	10%
NO OTHER PLAN	24%	18%	30%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	3%	3%	2%

5. How much attention have you paid to news stories about proposals to reform Social Security (ROTATE: a great deal of attention, a fair amount of attention, very little attention, no attention at all)?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
GREAT DEAL.....	42%	42%	42%
FAIR AMOUNT.....	39%	41%	36%
VERY LITTLE.....	14%	13%	16%
NO ATTENTION AT ALL.....	4%	3%	5%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	1%	1%	1%

6. As far as you know, is the money that is paid into the Social Security system (ROTATE: being saved by the government in order to pay for future benefits, or being spent on other programs with the promise to repay the money later)?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
BEING SAVED.....	12%	13%	10%
BEING SPENT	71%	68%	74%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	18%	18%	16%

ASK QUESTION 7 ONLY OF THOSE WHO RESPOND "NO (PUNCH 2) IN QUESTION 3

7. How confident are you that when you retire you will actually receive all your promised Social Security benefits? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident or not confident at all?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
VERY CONFIDENT	33%	31%	35%
SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	35%	41%	30%
NOT VERY CONFIDENT	15%	10%	18%
NOT CONFIDENT AT ALL.....	10%	9%	11%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	7%	9%	6%

Note: Results are based on 246 respondents who are not currently receiving Social Security benefits, including 118 AARP members and 125 non-members.

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

8. Which statement comes closer to your view?

- a) The Social Security system is financially sound for our children and grandchildren, and does not need significant changes.
- b) The Social Security system is not financially sound for our children and grandchildren, and needs significant changes.

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
FINANCIALLY SOUND/NO CHANGES	23%	24%	21%
NOT FINANCIALLY SOUND/NEEDS CHANGES	66%	65%	67%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	12%	11%	12%

9. If Congress does make changes to Social Security, do you think it will cost more to make changes now, or cost more to make changes later?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
COST MORE TO MAKE CHANGES NOW	16%	16%	16%
COST MORE TO MAKE CHANGES LATER.....	60%	61%	57%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	25%	23%	27%

10. If Congress does not make any significant changes to Social Security, do you think that would be responsible or irresponsible?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
RESPONSIBLE	22%	24%	19%
IRRESPONSIBLE.....	64%	63%	65%
DON'T KNOW.....	14%	13%	16%

11. If no significant changes are made in Social Security, how confident are you that our children and grandchildren will get the Social Security benefits they have been promised: very confident, somewhat confident, not very confident, or not confident at all?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
VERY CONFIDENT	12%	12%	11%
SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT	27%	29%	24%
NOT VERY CONFIDENT	31%	30%	31%
NOT CONFIDENT AT ALL.....	26%	24%	28%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	6%	6%	5%

12. In all of the proposals being discussed for changing Social Security, people 55 and older will get the same benefits they have been promised, at the same time they have been promised. In general, do you support changes to Social Security for our children and grandchildren, as long as nothing changes for you?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
YES	60%	62%	57%
NO.....	20%	20%	20%
DEPEND ON CHANGES (VOLUNTEERED)	8%	7%	8%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION	13%	11%	15%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Now I would like to read you a list of features that some people have mentioned as parts of different proposals for workers under age 55. For each one, please tell me if that feature would make you more likely to support changes to the current system, less likely to support changes to the current system, or if that feature would have no effect on your support for changes. (ROTATE QUESTIONS)

		MORE LIKELY	LESS LIKELY	NO EFFECT	DON'T KNOW
13. Workers under 55 would have the choice of staying in the current system or putting a portion of their Social Security payments into a personal retirement account.	<i>ALL</i>	53%	26%	12%	9%
	<i>AARP</i>	50%	29%	12%	10%
	<i>NON-AARP</i>	57%	23%	13%	7%
14. Workers under 55 who choose a personal retirement account could only invest their money in a conservative mix of bond and stock funds.	<i>ALL</i>	34%	38%	15%	14%
	<i>AARP</i>	35%	38%	14%	14%
	<i>NON-AARP</i>	33%	37%	17%	14%
15. Workers under 55 who choose a personal retirement account would not be allowed to take their money out until they retire.	<i>ALL</i>	57%	23%	12%	8%
	<i>AARP</i>	61%	22%	10%	7%
	<i>NON-AARP</i>	52%	24%	15%	9%
16. Workers under 55 who choose a personal retirement account could pass those savings on to their spouse, children, or a charity if they died before retirement.	<i>ALL</i>	67%	14%	12%	7%
	<i>AARP</i>	66%	15%	12%	7%
	<i>NON-AARP</i>	69%	12%	13%	6%

Now that we've talked about individual features, I'd like to ask you about a proposal that includes all of these features.

17. People 55 and older will get the same benefits they have been promised, at the same time they have been promised. Workers under 55 would have the choice of staying in the current system, or taking a portion of their Social Security payments and creating a personal retirement account that they would control. They would only be allowed to invest the money in their personal retirement account in a conservative mix of bond and stock funds, and they could not take the money out until retirement. They could pass those savings on to their spouse, children, or a charity if they died before retirement.

Do you think offering this type of personal retirement account to workers under the age of 55 would be a good idea or a bad idea?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
GOOD IDEA.....	59%	61%	59%
BAD IDEA.....	33%	33%	32%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	8%	7%	9%

18. Do you wish you had had the option to create a personal retirement account like this when you were younger?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
YES.....	50%	46%	55%
NO.....	42%	47%	36%
DON'T KNOW/NO OPINION.....	8%	8%	9%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

19. Are you a member of the American Association of Retired People, also known as the AARP?

	<i>ALL</i>
YES	55%
NO.....	45%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%

20. As far as you know, does the AARP leadership support or oppose adding voluntary personal retirement accounts to the Social Security system?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
SUPPORT.....	7%	9%	4%
OPPOSE.....	44%	51%	36%
DON'T KNOW THEIR OPINION.....	49%	40%	59%
REFUSED.....	1%	1%	1%

Now I have a few questions just for statistical purposes.

21. When thinking about politics today, do you normally consider yourself to be (ROTATE: very liberal, somewhat liberal, moderate, somewhat conservative, or very conservative)?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
VERY LIBERAL.....	5%	3%	6%
SOMEWHAT LIBERAL.....	13%	15%	11%
MODERATE	30%	34%	26%
SOMEWHAT CONSERVATIVE	27%	28%	27%
VERY CONSERVATIVE	18%	14%	23%
NO OPINION.....	7%	5%	8%

22. In politics today, do you normally think of yourself as (ROTATE: a Republican, an independent, or a Democrat)?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON-AARP</i>
IF "REPUBLICAN" OR "DEMOCRAT", ASK: Would you consider yourself a strong or a not-so-strong Republican/Democrat?	STRONG REP.....23%	21%	25%
	N-S-S REP.....10%	12%	9%
	IND LEAN REP..... 8%	9%	8%
	IND/NO PREF.....15%	14%	15%
IF "INDEPENDENT," ASK: Do you think of yourself as closer to the (ROTATE: Republican or Democratic Party)?	IND LEAN DEM..... 8%	8%	7%
	N-S-S DEM.....10%	7%	13%
	STRONG DEM.....21%	24%	18%
	REFUSED	6%	5%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

23. What is the last year of education you completed?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL	7%	6%	8%
HIGH SCHOOL GRAD	28%	27%	31%
SOME COLLEGE	25%	24%	26%
COLLEGE GRAD	24%	29%	18%
POST-COLLEGE	13%	13%	13%
REFUSED.....	3%	2%	4%

24. Would you please stop me when I read the correct category for your total household income?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
\$15,000 OR LESS	10%	8%	13%
\$15,000 TO \$30,000	15%	15%	15%
\$30,000 TO \$50,000	20%	21%	18%
\$50,000 TO \$75,000	12%	15%	9%
\$75,000 TO \$100,000.....	9%	9%	8%
\$100,000 OR MORE.....	8%	7%	8%
REFUSED.....	27%	24%	29%

25. Are you from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background?

IF "NO, ASK: What would you say is your main race: white, African-American, Asian, or something else?

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
YES/HISPANIC	6%	4%	7%
NO/WHITE.....	83%	84%	82%
NO/BLACK/AFRICAN-AMERICAN	8%	9%	6%
NO/ASIAN.....	1%	1%	1%
OTHER.....	2%	2%	3%
REFUSED.....	1%	1%	1%

26. Finally, in which state do you live? STATE FIPS CODE: _____

That's all the questions I have. Thank you very much for sharing your opinions with us.

27. Gender (from observation)

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
MALE	45%	44%	46%
FEMALE	55%	56%	54%

28. Year of birth (from sample) _____

AGE (Coded from sample):

	<i>ALL</i>	<i>AARP</i>	<i>NON- AARP</i>
55-64.....	36%	32%	42%
65-74.....	33%	38%	27%
75 AND OLDER	31%	30%	32%

Note: Percentages may not equal 100 percent due to rounding.