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Bush's Plan to Bankrupt Social Security

The Social Security system has been a safety net for the middle class since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Now, President George W. Bush is trying to burden it with incredible costs by giving millions of illegal aliens Social Security benefits to which they are not entitled. This so-called "Totalization" plan would bankrupt the system just as our baby-boom generation retires. A 2003 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report warned that the cost to U.S. taxpayers is likely to be vastly higher than official estimates.

Bush made this secret plan with Mexico in June 2004, and we know about it now because of a Freedom of Information lawsuit filed by TREA Senior Citizens League, a million-member seniors advocacy group.

Senator John Ensign (R-NV) and Rep. Barbara Cubin (R-WY) have introduced a bill to require Totalization agreements to be treated like bilateral trade agreements, and go into effect only if affirmatively passed by both Houses of Congress. Unless this bill passes, the Totalization agreement will automatically become law without congressional action.

Totalization is part and parcel of the Council on Foreign Relations five-year plan for the "establishment by 2010 of a North American economic and security community" with a common "outer security perimeter." The 59-page CFR document (which can claim Bush Administration approval because it is posted on a U.S. State Department website) demands that we "implement the Social Security Totalization Agreement negotiated between the United States and Mexico."

Totalization would allow millions of illegal Mexican workers to collect U.S. benefits based on their U.S. earnings under false or stolen Social Security numbers plus virtual earnings in Mexico. American citizens must work ten years to be eligible for Social Security benefits, but the Totalization agreement would allow Mexicans to qualify with only 18 months of work in the United States, and pretend to make up the difference by assuming work and tax payments in Mexico.

The United States has totalization agreements with 21 other countries in order to assure a pension to those few individuals who work in two countries (legally, of course) by "totalizing" their payments into the pension systems of both countries. All

existing totalization agreements are with industrialized nations whose retirement systems are on a parity with ours.

Mexican retirement benefits are not remotely equal to U.S. benefits. Americans receive benefits after working for 10 years, but Mexicans have to work 24 years before receiving any benefits. Mexican workers receive back in retirement only what they actually paid in plus interest, whereas the U.S. Social Security system is skewed to give lower-wage earners benefits greatly in excess of what they and their employers contributed.

Mexico has two different retirement programs, one for public-sector employees, which is draining the national treasury, and one for private-sector workers, which covers only 40% of the workforce. Most of the Mexicans who illegally entered the United States previously lived in poverty, where they were unemployed, or worked in the off-the-record economy, or worked for employers who did not pay taxes into a retirement system.

The Bush totalization plan would lure even more Mexicans into the United States illegally in the hope of amnesty and eligibility for Social Security benefits for themselves, as well as for their spouses and dependents who may never have lived in the United States.