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On January 31, 1940, the first United States Social Security check – for \$22.54 – was issued to a retired wage earner named Ida May Fuller who lived in Ludlow, Vermont. Yesterday, I

celebrated the 73rd Anniversary of the first Social Security benefit payment when I met with seniors at Legacy at Erie Station Independent Senior Living Community in Henrietta. In speaking with them yesterday, I reaffirmed my commitment to protecting Social Security against any cuts, and ensuring that the program is around for the next generation.

Social Security doesn't contribute a dime to the federal deficit, and has helped millions of seniors achieve financial security in their golden years. Before Social Security, over half of all seniors lived in poverty. Today, that number is less than ten percent.

I stand as strong as ever in my defense of this vital program, and will continue to oppose any attempts to balance our nation's budget on the backs of seniors and the middle class.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Louise".

D&C: Rep. Louise Slaughter: Protect Social Security

Written by Jessica Alaimo

<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20130131/NEWS01/301310049/Louise-Slaughter-Social-Security>

Rep. Louise Slaughter, D-Fairport, said the Social Security program is fine as it currently exists.

“What we need is more people working, paying into the system,” Slaughter said.

To celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the first Social Security check, Slaughter visited Legacy at Erie Station Independent Senior Living Community in Henrietta to speak with a group of senior citizens. At the luncheon, Slaughter vowed to protect Social Security from any cuts.

“There are some in Congress who want to decrease Social Security benefits in the name of balancing our budget,” Slaughter said. “I will remind them that Social Security doesn’t add a dime to the federal deficit, and that the money in Social Security belongs to present and future retirees.”

In 2011, Slaughter co-sponsored legislation to lift the Social Security tax exemption for higher income brackets. She said this would strengthen the system, and a spokesman for her said he expected the bill to be reintroduced this year.

Those at Legacy had varying views on Social Security — and all lacked faith that Congress would get anything meaningful done.

Ken Wirt, a resident at the facility, said changes do need to be made to Social Security. “There’s no doubt that we have to do something,” Wirt said. “It’s referred to as a gift — it’s not a gift — most of us have deserved what we see monthly and we worked many years to pay into it. There’s probably places where it can be cut back some, it’s misused in some cases.”

Harold Conroy, a resident at the facility, hopes his benefits will be protected. “I’m 83 years old and concerned about my money,” he said. “Right now I feel like the Social Security program, as far as I’m concerned, is working fine for me, and I don’t want to see any changes to it. I need the income,” Conroy said. While he agrees with Slaughter, he doesn’t have much faith in federal officials. “I don’t like the way they’re doing things in Washington, they should be working together and they’re not,” Conroy said.

Milton Parrini of Henrietta, whose mother lives at the facility, wants to see benefits go up. “For several years they never raised anything, they never gave us anything other than the normal amount,” he said. “We could use a little more, and I can see how other people living strictly off Social Security can’t live.” He had one word about how the issue is being taken up in Washington: “Terrible,” he said. With an exception. “I know Louise Slaughter is one of those people who has always been there for seniors, and I agree with what she has to say.”

In a statement, Rep. Chris Collins, R-Clarence, Erie County, also vowed to protect the program, and called on the House GOP to take it up in the upcoming budget. “Social Security is a benefit Americans have paid into all their working lives. Washington must take necessary action to protect this program for current retirees and those close to retirement, and preserve it for future generations,” Collins said. “The House Republicans will pass a budget this spring that will balance in 10 years, something Americans are demanding. That budget will provide the blueprint for how we can strengthen programs like Social Security and tackle this nation’s debt and out-of-control government spending.”