



**Wider
Opportunities
for Women**

BUDGET MATTERS DIGEST

On May 26, 2010, Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) hosted a blogging event in recognition of Older American's Month: **America's Budget Matters (So Does Yours)**. This year's event was designed to supplement a national conversation on the nation's fiscal health and to inform the proceedings of the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. This bi-partisan Commission is tasked with formulating recommendations for how to best balance the federal budget, in the short- and long-term, by the end of the year.



Bloggers from across the country voiced their opinions and concerns on the nation's budget matters, including thoughts on what the Obama Administration and Congress can do to promote economic security for Americans of all ages.

Check out a synopsis of this year's blogging event.

Stand Out Quotes: Blog Excerpts

- "Instead of looking at ways to reduce Social Security, the deficit commission should think of ways to strengthen it. Social Security isn't the problem. The truth is that Social Security provides a bare-bones safety net by helping millions of older Americans have an economically stable and secure retirement." – *Joellen Leavelle (Pension Rights Center)*
- "Policy makers should try to live in their districts for a month on only their estimated Social Security payment...[this] would demonstrate to policy makers how modest Social Security is and what a small part of a family's budget it turns out to be." – *Kate White (Elder Law of Michigan)*
- "Research shows that Social Security is a lifeline. The Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index), a tool that measures the real cost-of-living in retirement, demonstrates that Social Security alone is not enough to make ends meet for our nation's seniors. But more than 30% of seniors rely on Social Security for more than 90% of total income." – *Stacy Sanders (Wider Opportunities for Women)*
- "Before the Commission dives into cuts to Social Security as a larger fix to our budgetary woes, the Commission should figure out how to advise Congress to pay back its loans. If this country is going to be fiscally responsible, then it wouldn't borrow money out of Social Security and then

sneakily meet to figure out how to reduce promised benefits - in essence creatively devising a way to default on their loan." – *Ashley Carson (Older Women's League)*

- "Over 11 million older Americans struggle every day to make ends meet, with the economic downturn only worsening their precarious situations." – *Ramsey Alwin and Brandy Bauer (National Council on Aging)*
- "With the Elder Index NJFA highlighted an issue regarding some of our most vulnerable seniors and that is the NJ SSI State Supplement which is just \$31 a month and has been since 1986, a payment that is meant to help disabled persons make ends meet on a fixed income and just doesn't cut it at that level." - *Grace Egan and Melissa Chalker (New Jersey Foundation for the Aging)*
- "America's seniors want fiscal sanity to return to Washington but there's nothing sane about cutting programs, which touch the lives of virtually every American family, while ignoring the true causes of our current fiscal failures." – *National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare*
- "Unfortunately for many senior citizens, retirement planning was never really an option." – *Halona Agouda (The First Teacher Framework)*
- "I realize that the work of President Obama and Congress will have both direct and indirect effects on my budget. I hope that when they are making their budget decisions, they realize that living and striving for the "American Dream" is becoming harder and harder during this current economic climate." – *Morgan Gable (American Association of Homes and Services for the Aged)*

By the Numbers:

- ❖ 32 participating blogs
- ❖ 91 blog comments
- ❖ 21 organizational co-sponsors
- ❖ 3 blogs featured on Daily Kos
- ❖ 2 blogs featured on the Huffington Post
- ❖ 1 blog featured on Fire Dog Lake
- ❖ 35 blog tutorial participants

Popular Blog Topics:

- ❖ 13 blogs on national, state, and/or personal budgets
- ❖ 12 blogs on Social Security
- ❖ 7 blogs on elder economic security
- ❖ Other topics included: job creation, the Older Americans Act, Medicaid funding for states, the National Housing Trust Fund, financial planning and worker's rights

All participating blogs at the event website: <http://www.wowonline.org/budgetmatters>