

# The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program: Politics and Society

The history of welfare in the United States is long and complex, but one program has consistently been a favorite among Americans: Social Security. This program, which provides monthly benefits to retired workers, disabled adults, and survivors of deceased workers, has been in place since 1935 and has been credited with lifting millions of Americans out of poverty.



## School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program (Politics and Society in Modern America Book 82) by Susan Levine

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In this article, we will explore the history of Social Security, from its early beginnings to its current status as one of the most popular and successful welfare programs in the world. We will also discuss the politics and society that have shaped Social Security over the years, and we will explore some of the challenges that the program faces today.

## **The Early Years of Social Security**

The idea of social insurance has been around for centuries, but it was not until the late 19th century that the first social security programs were established in Europe. In the United States, the first major push for social security came in the early 20th century, when the Progressive Era reformers began to argue that the government had a responsibility to protect its citizens from the risks of old age, disability, and unemployment.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law. This landmark legislation established a system of social insurance that would provide monthly benefits to retired workers, disabled adults, and survivors of deceased workers. The program was funded through a payroll tax, and it was designed to provide a basic level of income security for all Americans.

## **The Expansion of Social Security**

In the years since its inception, Social Security has been expanded several times. In 1956, the program was extended to cover disabled adults. In 1965, the program was expanded to cover survivors of deceased workers. And in 1972, the program was expanded to cover disabled widows and widowers.

Today, Social Security is the largest social insurance program in the United States. It provides benefits to over 64 million Americans, and it is a major source of income for many seniors, disabled adults, and survivors of deceased workers.

## **The Politics of Social Security**

Social Security has been a political football since its inception.

Conservatives have long argued that the program is too expensive and that it discourages work. Liberals, on the other hand, have argued that Social Security is a vital safety net for millions of Americans.

In recent years, Social Security has come under increasing attack from conservatives. In 2005, President George W. Bush proposed privatizing Social Security, but his plan was defeated in Congress. In 2010, the Republican-controlled Congress passed a law that would have raised the retirement age for Social Security and reduced benefits for future retirees. However, this law was overturned by the Supreme Court in 2013.

Despite these attacks, Social Security remains popular with the American public. A 2019 poll found that 85% of Americans believe that Social Security is important.

## **The Society of Social Security**

Social Security has had a profound impact on American society. The program has helped to reduce poverty among seniors, disabled adults, and survivors of deceased workers. It has also helped to stabilize the economy by providing a steady stream of income to retirees.

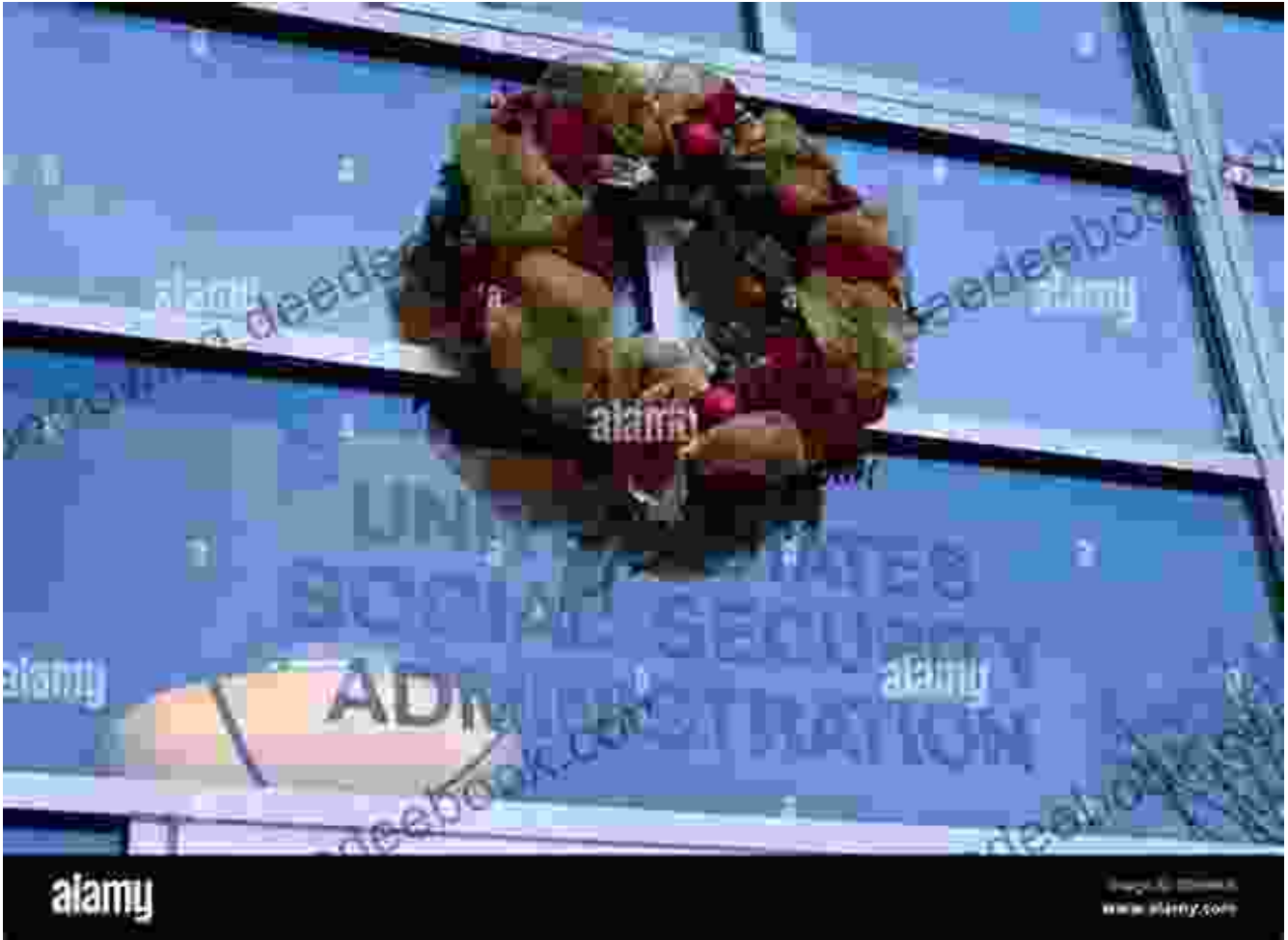
In addition, Social Security has helped to create a more just and equitable society. The program has helped to level the playing field for Americans who have been unable to save for retirement due to disability, unemployment, or other factors.

## **The Challenges Facing Social Security**

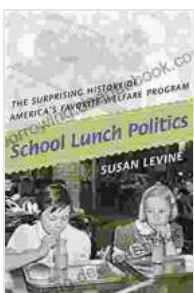
Social Security faces a number of challenges today. The program is facing a long-term funding shortfall, and the retirement age is scheduled to increase in the coming years. In addition, Social Security is increasingly being targeted by conservatives who believe that the program is too expensive and that it discourages work.

Despite these challenges, Social Security remains a vital safety net for millions of Americans. The program is popular with the American public, and it is likely to continue to play a major role in American society for many years to come.

The history of Social Security is a long and complex one, but the program has consistently been a favorite among Americans. Social Security has helped to reduce poverty, stabilize the economy, and create a more just and equitable society. Today, Social Security faces a number of challenges, but the program remains popular with the American public and is likely to continue to play a major role in American society for many years to come.



Source: Social Security Administration



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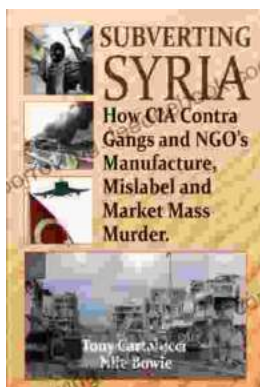
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