Damaris stuckey ap government social work essay

Social SecurityDamaris StuckeyAP GovernmentMrs. Etheridge1 March 2013Damaris StuckeyEtheridge, LAP Government and Politics4 January 2014Can elders survive without Social Security? Throughout the evolution of man, social security has been an issue. To maintain his standing, he had to work from the time he was able to walk until the time he was laid to rest. But what would happen if he could not work? In the waning years of his life or if injured, he would have no other choice than to depend on the other members of his family for the basic necessities he needed to survive. In many early civilizations, this was a death sentence. The weak and disabled would have been disposed of as they were considered to be a burden to the rest of the family group as well as a waste of precious resources. Often times, these death tolls were high and caused by intentional neglect, food shortages, natural disasters, and tribal wars. What if the American society was like that today? As nations were being born and empires grew, the family network began to weaken. With family members living so far apart, the elderly and disabled could not readily depend on them for the support they needed. How would they survive? In many cases, the family members were unable to provide the basic necessities needed for their own survival. This was especially true during the expansion years of the United States. Families moved further apart to occupy the cheap farm lands out west and after war came to deprive many of them of their chief resource provider. Often times, this would lead to unpaid debts and the loss of farms and homes because the survivors were either too young or too inexperienced to maintain their way of life. However, financial and natural disasters would bring about a change in American social dependence. With the crash of the Stock Exchange in the late 1920’s, America had entered into the Great

Depression. A great number of people were out of work, hungry, and being evicted from their homes. The windstorms that would destroy most of the farms in the central states in the early 1930’s only compounded the problem. The United States found it very hard to feed and shelter its own people. Once prosperous families now found that they were not always able to support themselves let alone another family member. Legislators had no choice but to step in to avoid the people from becoming homeless or starving to death. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt proposed an act that would allow the government to step in to help the elderly, disabled, needy, and unprivileged families. After a special Congressional Session, he signed into legislation the first American Social Security Act on August 14, 1935. This act established programs that removed thousands out of the soup lines and provided much needed relief for millions of others. Since President Roosevelt first enacted this Social Security, there have been many improvements and refinements to the legislation. Some of these refinements include eligibility for, funding for, and the supplementation of Social Security funds. Now, Social Security benefits particularly pertain to - but are not limited to - the retired workers, survivors of deceased workers, and disabled workers and their families. The major funding for Social Security comes from the working class people and their employers and is supplemented by the interest paid on money borrowed from it and general state taxes. The payments from the working class and employers might seem bad at first… but all the payments will help them in their future when they are eligible to receive Social Security benefits. Today, one in six or 56 million Americans receive Social Security benefits each month. Millions of children under the age of 18 can and do receive Social Security in some form. These forms are covered under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Women and Infant Children (WIC) programs, and Food Stamps. There are also over 1 million adults who have been disabled since childhood that are collecting benefits as dependents of a retired, disabled, or deceased parent. Retirees also make up a large portion of people receiving Social Security benefits. Their benefits are based on their work record. A person must earn at least 40 Social Security credits before they are eligible for the retirement benefits. Usually, a person earns four credits per year and is considered fully insured once the four credits have been reached. To earn credits you have to make a certain amount of money during that time period. Each year, the qualifying amount may change but no more than four credits can be earned for that year. If a person has been working for ten years or more they should have more than enough credits to qualify and may began receiving benefits as early as 62 years old (early retirement) or older. The amount of benefits a person receives is based on the workers past earnings and the worker must have worked in jobs covered by Social Security Disability insurance. Retirement benefits for Social Security were designed to replace part of a worker’s earnings from work. These benefits take into account lifetime earnings over a 35 year period. For people that earn a low income the benefits replace a larger share of past earnings. High income people that receive larger benefits replace a smaller percent of what they had been making. Because older people usually have more medical problems, medical bills can easily exceed their income. For this reason, recipients of Social Security and Social Security Disability benefits are usually entitled to Medicare as well. Medicare is for Americans that are 65 and older or workers that have become permanently disabled. This health insurance has made it easier for older people living on a fixed income to receive adequate medical and dental care. It has also greatly improved the health and vitality of many older Americans. This improved health has enabled our elders to live longer and have more productive lives. There are millions of Americans who are seniors, non-seniors, and Baby Boomers that are in need of some form of long term care. This type of care is for people who need assistance in performing normal daily activities. This is part of the Social Security program that pays retirement benefits to the vast majority of older Americans. To qualify for long term care, the condition must have persisted for an excess of three months. Since so many people do require these services under the Social Security Disability provision, it is the hope of all that the government should do more to help curb the cost of long term care. If an employee ever got injured or ill and couldn't work any more Social Security Disability insurance will pay monthly benefits to that person, but it is usually not enough to cover their normal expenses. This type of care can be extremely expensive and often require home, vehicle, and lifestyle modifications. The people receiving Social Security Disability also require health care as well. A good portion of people may receive what is known as Supplemental Security Income (SSI). These are the people that need the assistance of Social Security but do not qualify for one reason or another. This program was designed to pay benefits to disabled and medically unemployable adults as well as children who have limited income and resources. This benefit is not the same as regular Social Security benefits. The differences between them are the source of funding and that one does have to have accumulated Social Security credits to qualify for the Supplemental Security Income. The funding for this program comes from the general tax collection and not

Social Security taxes. Many people receiving Supplemental Security Income are also eligible to receive Medicaid. This jointly funded federal-state health insurance program is for the low income and underprivileged. It provides coverage for the children, blind, aged, disabled, and other people who are eligible to receive federally assisted income maintenance payments. The District of Columbia and 32 states provide Medicaid eligibility to people eligible for Supplemental Security Income. Another program that may qualify citizens for Medicaid is called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Contrary to public belief, there are more children in the United States that receive income from Social Security than there are adults. Many live in low income families that receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Most children receive benefits directly because one of their parents has died, become disabled, or retired. Children may receive these Social Security benefits until they are 18 or 19 years old and depending on if they are still in high school full time. In households where the worker has died, the spouse may collect benefits to care for that worker’s children if they are under the age of 16 and still in school or became a disabled dependent before the worker died. For these families, the Social Security benefits are based on how many children are eligible and the deceased workers past earnings. Larger families may receive higher benefits because the family limits total payments to every second child. (The first two children will receive benefits; the third child will not qualify for benefits, whereas the fourth child qualifies itself and the third child.) For a family of the same size, survivors of low income workers receive benefits that will replace a larger portion of lost earnings and higher income families will replace a much smaller portion of lost earnings. However… underprivileged children, the disabled, and retirees are not the only people who are eligible for Social Security benefits. Divorced spouses, spouses, and children of a deceased insured family member who do not have any or have not earned enough of their own credits may also qualify. These survivor benefits depend on the age of the insured member at the time of death, the age(s) of the surviving person(s) and their ability to work or earn their own credits. Eligibility for benefits is also determined on the marital status of the surviving spouse at the time of application. Out of all Americans adults that will receive Social Security, women will be the majority to collect it. Since women usually earn less money in the work force than men, they only pay forty-one percent (41%) of the collected Social Security taxes. The advantages that will allow them to collect approximately forty-nine percent (49%) more than they will contribute to their Social Security benefits are that they will receive benefits earlier and because they, on average, live longer than men do. An average married woman that is eligible to receive benefits is known to outlive her husband by an average of eight years. Because of this reason, the spousal and survivor benefits are key parts in the program. A person that has been married for ten years and got a divorce can still receive fifty percent (50%) of the spousal benefits provided that her own benefits are not significantly greater than his. Many will only qualify for a one time check for $255. 00. For a spouse that has been divorced and hasn’t married or remarried until they were 60 years old may receive one hundred percent (100%) of the survivor benefit. A disabled spouse is only eligible for this benefit until they reach the age of 50. At such time, they may qualify for their own benefits. Many people that apply for Social Security are denied because they don’t meet the ever changing requirements. The requirements are getting more stringent due to budget cuts and the high rate of unemployment. Social Security works on the basis that the economy is strong and has a solid working class. Today's working class supports today's Social Security recipients. When the unemployment rate is low, the Social Security taxes collect more revenue than the Social Security benefits pay out. This increase translates into more benefits and programs. When the unemployment rate is high, many programs are cut back or discontinued. Even when the cost of living goes up, Social Security benefits may remain the same. Whichever way the employment rate goes, the employed must still pay 6. 2 percent of every dollar earned to Social Security as a form of tax. Their employers must also contribute the same 6. 2 percent for every dollar their employees earn. These taxes that they pay goes into trust funds and are a way to set aside money that is earmarked for Social Security. A board of trustees, which is made up of the secretary of the treasury and Congress, oversee the trust funds and their use. Funds that are not immediately used to pay benefits are invested in special-issued Treasury notes that earn interest. The surplus money collected by Social Security may also be used to help pay for the expenses incurred by other government functions. In return, the trust funds receive treasury securities bearing a fair market rate of interest. Several governmental proposals have called for a portion of Social Security taxes to be put into individually held accounts instead of trust funds. Independent accounts make no independent contribution to the long term ability for Social Security to meet its expenses. The people that make these proposals fail to realize when they plan to shift Social Security taxes into an individual account; the change is no longer a form of Social Security. The traditional system is based more on insurance concepts and risk pooling while individual accounts depends on a property or ownership concept. It will, in essence, have become a long term Individual Retirement Account (IRA). Once the Individual Retirement Account has been tapped into, it no longer draws interest and the bearer has to pay taxes on the interest earned. By shifting Social Security taxes out of the traditional system, it hastens the day when the funds will become insufficient to pay scheduled benefits and the day that eligible recipients end up in poverty. To be able to pay benefits for current and future beneficiaries, the current scheduled Social Security taxes are necessary. People who are for private accounts system argue that private retirement savings are important as a supplement to Social Security. The supporters of traditional Social Security argue that finances can be balanced through incremental changes. However, both are right. Individuals who can supplement their Social Security benefits with some other form of retirement plan will have an easier go of retirement than those who cannot. By changing the entire Social Security system to individual accounts, the government would not have the funds to step in to help the disabled, impoverished, and needy families as it currently does. To know if one is eligible for Social Security benefits, they may request a verification letter from the Social Security Administration. There are two ways to receive a benefit verification letter; they may be requested online or by phone. The benefit verification letter not only proves a person’s eligibility to receive Social Security benefits but it also shows the monthly benefit amount that person receives. Usually the only times a person may need a benefit verification letter are when applying for a loan, to obtain other state/local government benefits, income verification for a landlord or housing assistance, or to verify medical health insurance and retirement status or disability. Before the law was changed, Social Security initially excluded all government employees, railroad workers, farm workers, and others from receiving benefits. Ever since Congress passed the legislation in 1983, the retirement age for full benefits for Social Security has been increasing and includes these workers. Initially the full retirement benefit age was 65 years old and the early retirement age was 62 years old. The early retirement age has not changed. The full retirement now, it is as years go by the age for full retirement benefits is getting higher and higher. The early retirement age will continue to stay the same but it will be reduced more than usual. If an individual happens to make it to the full benefit retirement age and delays in collecting benefits they will receive a financial bonus. A financial bonus is an additional eight percent (8%) benefits to any person who reached the retirement age. The longer a person takes in receiving retirement benefits the higher their percent will be in the financial bonus. Since those are rare cases that people delay to get their retirement benefits they usually claim social security before they reach the age for full benefits. For this reason, one would think that since we have so many Baby Boomers, retirement will be unaffordable for them. Actually, the retirement cost for Baby Boomers has mostly been paid. Since Baby Boomers have been here between the years of 1946 and 1964 they have experienced more in their lifetime and seen how the economy has changed in several ways. They have been through seven recessions and lived through rapid inflations and other unexpected disasters. They have seen unemployment decline above ten percent (10%) twice and disappearing pensions. Fortunately, Social Security will be there to back up any of their failed investments or less than profitable nest eggs. Social Security plays a significant role in keeping Americans out of poverty. For older Americans, Social Security is their major - and often, their only - source of income. The reason it is that way for Americans aged 65 and older is because they lack significant income from other resources. Government or private pensions are received by about less than half of the elderly households. If older Americans had to rely solely on their income outside of Social Security, most of them could not afford their accustomed way of living. Without Social Security nearly 14 million seniors and 1 million children would be living in poverty. Even if a person cannot receive Social Security or the other benefits at the time, they will still have to pay it because it is, after all, insurance. Who wouldn’t want Social Security when it provides life and disability insurance for you and your family? Though it is insurance, it can always be jeopardized. Though a person might have social security, it is still their responsibility to keep up with their social security information. The social security card that they are issued at birth contains a number that ties all their life information together. Everyone has a different social security number so if somebody every tried to still your identity you would know it wouldn’t be them because you’re the only one with that number. Identity theft is one of the highest rate crimes in America. Most identity thefts use your social security number and credit to apply for more credit. It is a very serious issue because they could use your card and not pay your bills then in the end you are the one who are responsible for paying bills for things you never purchased. If someone uses your Social Security number without you knowing the first thing you should do is report it. Social Security has no involvement on trying to resolve the problem in cases of identity thefts. It is up to the number holder and law enforcement to resolve such matter. It is normal for a person to believe if they got a new Social Security number that all their identity theft problems will disappear. Unfortunately, the process isn’t that easy for a person to get assign a new Social Security number they must prove their age and U. S. citizenship and identity. Since government agencies and private business will still have your records under your old Social Security number it still can cause conflict for a person. Because a person’s credit information will still be under their old Social Security number, it will be difficult for them to get credit under their new Social Security number. From the 1960’s until now Social Security still has the same effect and purpose. Without Social Security younger Americans will have to take care of their elderly parents. Therefore, it will deplete their incomes and also deplete revenue for their own retirement. It will be shame for a person to work all their lives just to have their security taken away. This is why we have to protect Social Security from our government and identity thieves.