

Slate

Grandma's Benefits Imperil Junior's Future

How you can watch—and participate in—the live *Slate*/Intelligence Squared debate Oct. 4 at NYU.

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Is entitlement reform necessary for future generations? As Texas Gov. Rick "[Ponzi scheme](#)" Perry may be learning, entitlement reform is a risky issue for any politician seeking national office. Sixty percent of Americans [oppose cutting](#) Social Security or Medicare benefits. A candidate with an interest in, say, winning the election, is more likely to support the status quo than advocate for benefit slashing. Off the campaign trail, many economists and politicians insist that cutting

entitlements is the key to future fiscal security. Another group counters that other government programs are far more problematic, and should be cut first.

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This contentious question of entitlement reform is the subject of the next *Slate*/Intelligence Squared U.S. live debate on Oct. 4. We'd like to invite you to attend the debate—we're offering *Slate* readers a 30 percent discount on tickets (see below)—and you're invited to submit questions for the debaters. We'll pick the most interesting one and moderator John Donovan will ask it at the debate.

The proposition of the debate is "[Grandma's benefits imperil Junior's future](#)." In other words, do entitlements such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid saddle young Americans with unmanageable debt, asking them to sacrifice their future for the sake of today's elderly and poor? Or if we cut these programs, would we be balancing the budget on the backs of the aged and sick, leaving behind society's most vulnerable?

Join us at NYU's Skirball Center in New York City for an Oxford-style live debate. Fox News commentator Margaret Hoover and Mort Zuckerman, chairman and editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report* will argue for the motion. Howard Dean, the former DNC Chairman and Gov. of Vermont will team up with Jeff Madrick, the editor of *Challenge* magazine, to argue *against* the motion.

If you've got a question for the debaters, write it below in the comments section of this article. We'll select one to read live at the debate. *Be sure to include your full name and hometown with your question.*

The details about the debate:

When/Where: Oct. 4, 2011 at Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, New York University, located at 566 LaGuardia Place (at Washington Square South).

The evening begins at **5:45 p.m.** with a cash-bar reception for panelists and audience members; the live debate starts at **6:45 p.m.** and ends at 8:30 p.m. For venue information, [click here](#).

Tickets: \$40 (\$12 for students with ID). [Purchase tickets here](#), and be sure to enter the special *Slate* promotional discount code, **Slate30**, to receive 30 percent off your ticket.

About the Debaters

For the motion:

Margaret Hoover is a Fox News Contributor and the author of the book [American Individualism: How a New Generation of Conservatives Can Save the Republican Party](#). Hoover is a veteran of the Bush Administration White House, where she worked in the Office of Management and Budget and served as associate director in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs. She's also worked on two presidential campaigns, at the Department of Homeland Security, and on Capitol Hill. Hoover is committed to renewing the Republican Party to enable it to connect with a new generation of Americans, by embracing a conservatism that emphasizes individual freedom and fiscal conservatism as its central pillars.

Mort Zuckerman is chairman and editor-in-chief of *U.S. News & World Report* and publisher of the *New York Daily News*. He is also the co-founder, chairman, and CEO of Boston Properties. A frequent commentator on *The McLaughlin Group*, Zuckerman argues, "A new era of American austerity is the only way to put things right." A recipient of three honorary degrees and a graduate of McGill University, McGill Law School, Wharton Graduate School of Business, and Harvard Law School, Zuckerman is a trustee of Memorial Sloan-Kettering and a member of the International Peace Institute, the Bank of America Global Wealth & Investment Management Committee, and the Council on Foreign Relations.

Against the motion:

Howard Dean is the former DNC Chairman and governor of Vermont. In 1982, Dean transitioned from a full-time practicing physician to an elected representative in Vermont, serving as governor for 12 years. Dean left office in 2003 to run for president, during which he implemented innovative fundraising strategies via the Internet. During his tenure as the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Dean created the "50-state strategy," a strategy credited with helping Democrats make historic gains in 2006 and 2008. A graduate of Yale University and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Howard Dean currently works as an independent consultant focusing on health care, early childhood development, alternative energy, and the expansion of grassroots politics around the world.

Jeff Madrick, a former economics columnist for the *New York Times* and current editor of *Challenge* magazine, is a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books*. The author of several award-winning books, Madrick recently authored [*Age of Greed: The Triumph of Finance and the Decline of America, 1970 to the Present*](#), a *Publishers Weekly* Top Ten pick for spring 2011 and a *Washington Post* political bestseller. *Age of Greed* outlines a vivid history of how greed bred America's economic ills and of the men most responsible for it. Madrick has also served as a policy consultant and speech writer for Senator Edward M. Kennedy and other U.S. legislators.

The moderator:

John Donovan is a correspondent for ABC News *Nightline*. He has served as ABC White House correspondent, along with postings in Moscow, London, Jerusalem, and Amman.