

Menu**News**[Obituaries](#)[Opinion](#)[State](#)[Nation](#)[World](#)[Police](#)[Photos](#)[Archives](#)**Sports**[High Schools](#)[College](#)[Professional](#)**Money**[Stocks](#)[Lottery](#)**Living**Sponsored by Gary
Lawrence Insurance[Answer Line](#)[Datebook](#)[News For Kids](#)[Entertainment](#)[Games](#)[Travel](#)**Health**[Archives](#)**Weather**[National](#)**Classifieds**[Employment](#)[Real Estate](#)[Automotive](#)[Merchandise](#)**Shop&Save**[Advertisers](#)**News****Ex-House leader: Social Security should go away**

By GLENN EVANS

Saturday, February 26, 2005

TYLER – Former U.S. House Majority Leader Dick Arme y said Friday that Social Security should be phased out rather than saved.

"I think if you leave people free to choose, it will be phased out by competition," the former Republican congressman from Lewisville told reporters before sharing a President's Day Dinner with the Smith County Republican Club.

Arme y, who left Congress in 2002 after 18 years, said younger Americans already believe personal investments produce greater retirement savings than Social Security will.

"We now have a generation of people that are thoroughly committed to investing their hopes and futures in private IRAs (Individual Retirement Accounts)," Arme y said. "People will always do better for themselves when they are free to choose from among competing options than if they are compelled. Most thoughtful people could do better."

He said Social Security must remain solvent long enough to ensure older Americans collect on their lifelong payments into the system. But Americans who are at least younger than 50 should be allowed to divert their Social Security payments into personal accounts, he said.

"If it is such a great deal, why does the government have to make it mandatory," he said.

He added there will never be a class of destitute Americans who neglected to do their own investing.

"That argument might make sense in terms of a Social Security that gave a good return," he said, adding the government takes 15 percent of Americans' income in the Social Security tax. "And then they have the audacity to complain that we working men and women don't save enough."

Arme y called Social Security the foundation stone of Democrats' New Deal and Great Society philosophies. He said George W. Bush is the first president with sufficient party backing in Congress to propose diverting a portion of Social Security taxes to personal investment accounts.

"Ronald Reagan would have probably had the courage to move on this change, but he lived with only a Democratic party in Congress," he said.

Arme y also said Republican ambitions to add amendments banning flag burning and gay marriage to the U.S. Constitution are unlikely to be fulfilled. He said organizations that backed the Equal Rights Amendment, a failed proposal to make it unconstitutional to pay women less for the same work, were well-organized and politically powerful.

"Sponsors of the ERA were the meanest people I've seen in Congress, and they were unable to do it," he said. "So I don't take amending the Constitution very seriously, quite frankly. It's a big job. It's not likely to happen."

How To

[Subscribe](#)

[Delivery Inquiries](#)

[Service Survey](#)

[Buy a print ad](#)

[Buy an online ad](#)

[Staff directory](#)

[Reach web staff](#)

[Write to the editor](#)

[Set my homepage](#)

[Email this page to a friend](#)

© 2005 Cox Texas Newspapers, L.P. - [The Longview News-Journal](#)

By using this service, you accept the terms of our [visitor agreement](#) and [privacy policy](#).
Registered site users, you may [edit your profile](#).