

WisDems: ICYMI - Ron Johnson calls for turning Social Security, Medicare into discretionary spending programs

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Madison, Wis. - [A new report](#) shows that Ron Johnson argued that the Social Security and Medicare programs should be changed to allow cuts and not guarantee the earned benefits that older Wisconsinites have earned after paying into the program for decades.

[Wisconsin State Journal](#): Ron Johnson calls for turning Social Security, Medicare into discretionary spending programs

Key Points:

- Saying programs like Social Security and Medicare suffer from improper oversight, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson on Monday called for turning every government program into discretionary spending programs, meaning Congress would have to allocate funding for the programs each year.
- Such an effort could lead to yearly battles over the programs — fights that some Republicans say are necessary to cut down on government spending, while many Democrats consider the programs to be some of the nation's most beneficial.
- Spending on many defense and education programs has long been

discretionary, but programs like Social Security and Medicare are mandatory spending programs, which don't need congressional authorization every year. Social Security and many other mandatory spending programs are indefinitely in effect.

- “What’s mandatory are things like Social Security and Medicare,” Johnson said on the Regular Joe show Monday. “If you qualify for the entitlement, you just get it no matter what the cost. And our problem in this country is that more than 70% of our federal budget, of our federal spending, is all mandatory spending...What we ought to be doing is we ought to turn everything into discretionary spending so it’s all evaluated so that we can fix problems or fix programs that are broken.”
- Johnson’s comments came during a conversation about a measure to expand medical care eligibility for veterans who may have been exposed to toxins from burn pits. Republicans opposed the bill for including a provision that would move spending from the Department of Veterans Affairs’s discretionary budget to its mandatory budget, not subject to congressional reauthorization, which they said would allow for unrelated and wasteful spending.