

WESTFIELD, Mass. □ Congressman John W. Olver discussed the future of Social Security with constituents at a public forum in Westfield on Tuesday.

Olver said the public forum offered the opportunity to talk about the challenges facing Social Security and the president's plan to change it.

"President Bush is pushing very hard for major changes to Social Security," Olver said. "As Congress considers the president's plan, we need to hear from you."

While the president has not yet provided specific details on his plan, the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the president's plan would cost \$1.2 trillion over the next 10 years.

Today, nearly 50 million Americans rely on Social Security and receive an average benefit of about \$950 a month.

"The president's approach would dismantle Social Security as we know it □ a system that has been essential to the lives of millions of Americans."

Without Social Security, about 48 percent of all American seniors would fall below the poverty line, and about 10 million more would be at risk of poverty.

Of the roughly 660,000 people Olver represents in the First Congressional District, there are 115,153 Social Security recipients.

"Private accounts would not improve Social Security's long-term solvency, but would undermine its ability to pay benefits to seniors."

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