

SENATOR

Paul Tsongas Reports

Visits Highlight Issues Concerning Elderly

Responding to expressions of concern about Social Security reforms and the current Administration's policy on Medicare and other issues, Senator Tsongas made a daylong sweep across Massachusetts on March 30 to meet with groups of senior citizens in four cities.

At the meetings in Boston, Cambridge, Worcester and Springfield, he reaffirmed his commitment to the elderly, and he answered questions covering a range of issues of concern to senior citizens.

Regarding the Social Security bailout passed by Congress this spring, he said, "The Social Security system was in real trouble. The solution was a compromise, something nobody likes." But, he pointed out, if there had been no compromise, Social Security checks would have stopped in July. The package of Social Security reforms enacted by Congress assures the basic health of the system, he explained, adding, "That is why it had the support of Congressmen Claude Pepper and Tip O'Neill."

The bill passed the Congress overwhelmingly, with Senator Tsongas' support, and was signed into law by President Reagan.

During his meetings with Massachusetts senior citizens, Senator Tsongas spoke against the Presi-



Speaking in Cambridge, Senator Tsongas discusses issues of particular interest to senior citizens.

dent's proposed cutbacks in Medicare. Under the Administration proposal, Medicare beneficiaries would have to pay an average of \$1200 more for a 60-day hospital stay than they do now.

"President Reagan is a senior citizen," he told an overflow audience in the Worcester City Council chambers, "but his friends don't have to worry about the things you're talking about."

Further, Senator Tsongas expressed concern about those senior citizens who live on fixed incomes and are unable to afford nutritious meals in an era of rising food prices. He cited, in particular, his opposition to the Administration's proposal to slash \$56 million from the Older Americans Act budget, including \$28 million for congregate meal sites and \$4 million for home-delivered meals.

The President, he said, is proposing reductions in these vital programs for

senior citizens in order to finance an excessive military build-up that drains resources away from the United States economy.

"We're talking millions, billions, and trillions of dollars for the military," he said. "When you're talking money like that, you have to take money from somewhere else."

Senator Tsongas also made these points during his March 30 meetings:

- He supports repeal of the law which permits the Internal Revenue Service to withhold 10 percent of interest and dividend income;
- He wants to prevent transfer of the Senior Aide Program to the jurisdiction of the Department of Health and Human Services, where its budget might be devalued by being buried in a general block grant;
- He favors tax incen-

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