



**New Prices  
Effective  
May 1, 2010**

## Martin Cleaning Service

**Carpet & Upholstery  
Cleaning  
Residential &  
Commercial Services**  
Minimum Service CHG.  
\$45.00

A small distance/travel charge  
may be applied

### CARPET CLEANING

**2 Cleaning Areas or  
more \$30.00 Each Area**

**Pre-Spray Traffic Areas**  
(Includes: 1 small Hallway)

**1 Cleaning Area (only)**  
\$40.00

Includes Pre-Spray Traffic Area  
(Hallway Extra)

**Stairs (12-16 stairs - With  
Other Services): \$25.00**

**Area/Oriental Rugs:**  
\$25.00 Minimum  
**Area/Oriental Rugs (Wool):**  
\$40.00 Minimum

**Heavily Soiled Area:**  
Additional \$10.00 each area  
(Requiring Extensive Pre-Spraying)

### UPHOLSTERY CLEANING

Sofa: \$69.00  
Loveseat: \$49.00  
Sectional: \$109 - \$139  
Chair or Recliner:  
\$25 - \$49  
Throw Pillows (With  
Other Services): \$5.00

### ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- Area & Oriental Rug Cleaning
- Auto/Boat/RV Cleaning
- Deodorizing & Pet Odor Treatment
- Spot & Stain Removal Service
- Scotchguard Protection
- Minor Water Damage Services

**SEE CURRENT FLYER  
FOR ADDITIONAL  
PRICES & SERVICES  
Call for Appointment  
(503) 281-3949**

# OPINION



## Cutting Your Benefits Not the 'Middle' Way

Does anyone  
actually like  
this idea?

BY PETER HART

The federal budget is, according to many experts, a "political document." It's how our political leaders convey their priorities to the people they serve.

So what's the political lesson of Barack Obama's recent budget plan? He apparently thinks older people could get by with less.

The Obama budget has attracted a lot of attention — and controversy — because he's making a rather shocking opening offer to the Republican opposition: Let's cut Social Security benefits and Medicare spending in the name of shrinking the federal deficit.

The White House supports something called the "chained CPI." That doesn't just sound painful — it could very well hurt a lot of people. The idea is to cut

benefits by a small amount every year — about a quarter of 1 percent — by using a different method for calculating inflation. As the Center for Economic & Policy Research shows, the cuts add up over time. Twenty years on, that's almost a 6 percent cut in benefits for retirees in their late 80s.

Does anyone actually like this idea? Not really. Polls have long shown that it garners meager support, and probably for good reason. Most people know (or are) people who rely on Social Security benefits, and they know that most retirees aren't living high on the hog.

But many journalists and pundits are cheering Obama's gambit as a move to the "center" or the "middle." That's what NPR's Cokie Roberts called it. Others portray the move as "good politics": Obama is making his more liberal supporters angry, which helps portray him as squarely in the middle, willing to make the tough choices.

But cutting benefits for elderly retirees is hardly brave. And it wrongly makes Social Security, which doesn't add a penny

to the deficit, the focus of deficit reduction.

So how can reporters talk about this as if it's the "middle" of anything? Because they see these fights as squabbles between politicians — the Democrats on one side, the Republicans on the other. In this view, Obama is trying to bridge the gap between the two sides.

Who's left out of that story? The rest of us. And when pollsters ask the public what they'd like to see happen in order to reduce the deficit, the public speaks up loud and clear: The public prefers cutting the bloated military budget and raising taxes on the wealthy. There are any number of ways to get the country's finances in order. Clearly, we don't have to take anything away from the elderly. But how often do you hear reporters talk about those sensible, widely supported policies as "the middle"?

The media didn't create this political problem, but they have played along. Corporate media constantly churn out lots of fear-mongering reports about Social Security's supposed "crisis." That

propaganda lays the groundwork for politicians to claim they must "reform" it. And reform always stands as code for cuts, which are supposedly necessary and bold.

There's more to the language games than that. As The New Yorker recently reported, the press has been complicit in re-branding Social Security and Medicare not as earned benefits but as "entitlements." Ronald Reagan started using that term, and the press went along with it.

What we call things matters. When politicians speak of the need to "cut entitlements," they know that sounds better than "the retirement benefits you paid for are going to keep getting smaller every year. We're going to send you a smaller check than you were expecting, and it will keep getting smaller every year."

It's bad enough that politicians won't level with the people they're supposed to represent. But when the media do the same thing, and cheer these political leaders for their bravery, they show us whose side they're on.

Peter Hart is the activism director of Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting.