

PROTECT OUR CHECKS

HOW TO HOST YOUR OWN PROTECT OUR CHECKS ACTIVATION

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Introduction

Thank you for leading the cause to host your own Protect Our Checks rally in your community. There is power in the collective, and we are thrilled to work alongside you in this movement!

Before you begin, please make sure there isn't already a Protect Our Checks rally in your area. You can check the map before registering to make sure there aren't multiple activations in one location.

If not, you can begin registering your event [here](#).

Now that you are an official host, you will have access to digital toolkits and messaging guidance, and you will serve as the official leader of your rally.

A Movement Moment: Why Protect Our Checks?

This year is the 90th anniversary of the signing of the Social Security Act. A significant piece of legislation that provides economic comfort to millions of people across the United States. As the Trump Administration and Elon Musk's DOGE have forced offices to make staffing cuts, funding freezes, and service changes, House Republicans have done nothing to protect their constituents and ensure the resources that their constituents rely on remain intact.

On Saturday, August 16th, we are gathering across the country to call on our members of Congress to protect one of their most vital sources of income for families: Social Security. *Protect Our Checks* calls on elected officials to keep these offices open and to stop fund freezes instead of prioritizing tax breaks for billionaires.

Our core message: Everyone on Social Security is someone, or someone that everyone knows.

And it's not just seniors who will be affected. People with disabilities, widows, low-income workers, and many others who rely on Social Security benefits will be severely impacted and will make

affording basic necessities, such as food, education for their children, rent, and utilities, that much harder.

- **MAKE IT INCLUSIVE.** We are looking to create an inclusive environment where everyone can speak about the impact Social Security cuts will have on them.
- **MAKE IT VISIBLE.** The collective power these rallies will bring will show those in power with harmful agendas that threaten the economic security of so many people in America that they cannot and should not make threats to Social Security.
- **MAKE IT LOUD.** We need to build a prominent collective voice so that EVERYONE across the country can not only see, but hear, our message: Protect Our Checks!

Hosting a Protect Our Checks Rally

On August 16th, rallies and community events will be held nationwide to highlight the impact and importance of Social Security. Now more than ever, it's vital that you make your voice heard! No event is too big or too small, and everyone's rally will look different. We encourage each of you to rally your communities in the ways that you know best to repeat the message: PROTECT OUR CHECKS.

Resources

- **Messaging**
- **Posters and Graphics**
- **Social Media**

Planning Your Event

Saturday, August 16th, is the day we will all gather together to make our collective voices heard. Whether this is your first rally or your tenth, we want to share some tips with you on how to make this an impactful demonstration.

- **Location, Location, Location** - Finding an area that can accommodate large crowds will be a key factor in making your rally a success. Ensure that the event space is inclusive and accessible to everyone. ***As a reminder, this event will take place in August***, which is typically a hotter time of year in some parts of the country. If you are in a location with hotter temperatures, consider finding venues that are indoors.
- **Delegate Roles** - Many hands make light work. You don't have to do this work alone. Once you've [registered your event](#), gather a group that you can rely on to secure speakers, find a venue, get supplies, and provide any other logistical support you'll need for your rally.
- **Get Speakers** - Securing compelling speakers is key to an engaging and impactful rally. You'll need to identify people who can effectively convey the message and inspire others to take action, even beyond the day of the rally. Some examples of good speakers include:

- People who rely on Social Security (seniors, people with disabilities, widows/widowers, those who depend on it for supplemental income, veterans, etc.)
 - People who work or have worked in Social Security offices
 - Elected officials
 - Faith Leaders
 - Organizations that are advocates of Social Security
- **Be Flexible** - Can't get everyone in person? Don't worry, in this digital era, we encourage you to create a digital town hall for a more inclusive environment. Use [ZOOM](#) or [Google Meet](#) to gather people in your community and have a conversation about the importance and impact of Social Security.

BEFORE THE RALLY

- **Gather and Set Up** - You and all your key players should arrive at your venue **at least** 90 minutes before your event. Set up the audio equipment and the backdrop, prepare your speakers, ensure you have snacks and water, and verify that all accessibility elements are in place. Also, if local press are coming, make sure you have a designated spot for them to live-tape and conduct interviews with you and the participants.

DURING THE RALLY

- **Excite Your Attendees** - As people start arriving, begin handing out signs and other materials. Use the "[Protect Our Checks](#)" playlist, [incorporate chants](#), and ensure your master of ceremonies (MC) brings the energy to keep the crowd engaged and excited.
- **Keep Track of Time** - We know speakers can be passionate once they get on the mic. Make sure you give them a time limit (at least 2-5 minutes) so that they can share their stories and use the [talking points](#).
- **Post on Social Media** - During the event, be sure to take photos and videos, and use the hashtag #ProtectOurChecks.

AFTER THE RALLY

- **Continue the Momentum** - Contact all of your participants and thank them for a great turnout. Remember, the work doesn't stop here. Continue to engage with them to continue these crucial conversations about Social Security and work together to fight for its protection.
- **Keep Posting** - Over the next few days, continue to post on social media about the impact and the number of people who came out to support protecting Social Security. Remember to tag us @UnrigOurEconomy!
- **Write a Press Release** - Writing a press release to send to local media is a great way to recap your rally. Be sure to include quotes, pictures, and videos to demonstrate the impact of your rally.

- **Submit a Letter to the Editor (LTE)** - Getting a group of people to submit LTEs to different publications is a powerful way to talk about the impacts of cuts to Social Security. The more stories you collect to submit, the louder your impact can be.

Getting Media Attention

- **Send a Clear, Compelling Media Advisory** - Write a concise advisory with who, what, when, where, and why. Include speaker names, visuals (e.g. signs, crowds, performances), and a strong title (e.g., *"People Across [City, Town] Plan to Rally on Social Security Anniversary to Call on Congress to: Protect Our Checks!"*) Send it to local TV, radio, newspapers, and digital outlets at least a few days before the event, and follow up the morning of the event.
- **Offer Strong Visuals and Spokespeople** - Line up a few diverse, media-trained speakers ready to give short, clear soundbites on camera. Let the press know where they can easily set up gear and get interviews.
- **Leverage Social Media and Tag Reporters** - Promote the rally online and share short clips or graphics ahead of time. Tag local reporters and outlets on platforms like X (Twitter) or Instagram—make it easy for them to notice and share. Post live from the event and send media follow-up with photos, quotes, and a press release after.

Sample Run of Show (Rally)

NOTE: Your speaking portion should last about 30 minutes

- **Welcome & Land Acknowledgment** - Your MC should open the rally, [acknowledge the land](#) and any partner organizations, and state the rally's purpose and stakes.
- **First Speaker** - Your first speaker should be someone with a lived experience of being on Social Security and its importance. They should ground the attendees and repeat the call to action: **Protect Our Checks**.
- **Chant / Call & Response** - Between speakers, have your MC lead chants to keep the crowd energized.
- **Second Speaker** - Can be an advocate or community leader. They should focus on community impact and organizing efforts. They can talk about current legislation and continue the call to action.
- **Third Speaker** - Should be an elected official or an ally organization. They should offer a policy perspective or commitment to the issue. They should end with a motivating message to keep up the fight.
- **Final Call to Action** - MC returns to recap the call to action, share the social media hashtag, and outline next steps.

Contingency and Safety Plan

When organizing a rally, creating a robust safety and contingency plan is essential to protect attendees and ensure a smooth event:

- Conduct a site assessment before you lock down the location to identify entry/exit points, medical stations, and potential hazards. Coordinate with local emergency services (police, fire, EMS) in advance of the event and inform them of your plans.
- Designate trained volunteers as safety marshals to monitor the crowd, assist with de-escalation, and direct people in case of an emergency.
- Prepare a list of emergency contacts and ensure all team members know how to reach them.
- Set up a check-in system for volunteers and a clear communication channel (like a group text or chat) to relay urgent updates.
- Have a backup plan for weather, disruptions, or counter-protesters—such as an alternative indoor location or a digital pivot.
- Provide information to attendees on what to bring (e.g., water, sunscreen, ID, comfortable shoes, rain jackets/umbrellas), what to avoid (e.g., large bags), and how to stay safe.
- Consider creating a one-page safety flyer and distributing it on social media or at the event. Keeping everyone informed and prepared minimizes risk and promotes a strong, unified message.
- ***Here are a few helpful tips if counter-protesters show up to your event:***
 - Take a breath.
 - Remain polite and calm.
 - Use your judgement on crowd control (e.g., have someone in the crowd start on-message chants).
 - If it becomes too disruptive, allow protesters to deliver their message while YOU make a judgment call on whether it is safe to continue the event. Don't put yourself in harm's way. Your safety is our #1 priority.
 - Do not physically interact with the protesters.
 - Do not attempt to surround or shout them down.

How to Make Your Rally Inclusive

- **Select an Accessible Venue and Route** - Ensure the rally location, stage, restrooms, and pathways are wheelchair-accessible. Provide clear maps highlighting ADA entrances, seating areas, and parking. Avoid uneven surfaces, stairs without ramps, or narrow passageways.
- **ASL Interpreters and Captioning** - If possible, hire certified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters for all speakers and performances. Provide live captioning (CART) on screens or via mobile access for deaf and hard-of-hearing participants.
- **Alternative Formats for Materials** - You may have people who speak different languages, so ensure that you translate your materials to accommodate everyone's participation. Additionally, consider using larger font sizes for printed materials.