



## President Obama's Budget Proposal Addresses Wealth Inequality in America: Just Kidding

Posted on April 11, 2013 by Randi Storch

President Obama presented his budget proposal in the face of sequestration, the effects of which are slowly making their way into federal programs and offices around the country and the world. Because proposals are just that, proposals — tentative imaginings of which directions the nation may choose to move, Obama's concession to tie Social Security to chained CPI is troubling and suggests his willingness to further undermine the integrity of our social fabric. By lowering the degree that cost of living payments would increase for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities, President Obama's budget puts our nation's financial burden on the wrong people. Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, on the other hand, makes an excellent case for shifting the burden to the wealthiest Americans who can afford (and in many cases who are responsible) for our current economic crisis ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/09/bernie-sanders-obama-budget\\_n\\_3046023.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/09/bernie-sanders-obama-budget_n_3046023.html)).



Working Families make the argument against chained CPI

What I find fascinating about President Obama's Social Security proposal is not that it is wrong-headed (which it is), but that it misses an opportunity to imagine a less unequal America. I keep thinking about Alice Kessler-Harris's important book, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America* and its eye-opening documentation of how legislators' gendered (and racial) imaginations shaped the limited social policy they created. This ultimately limited access to full economic citizenship for women and people of color. Fortunately when it came to Social Security, market forces, labor politics, and political activism led to a broadening of the program's coverage. By the time an amendment to the program passed in 1954, "almost all wage earners [were] covered" (156), at least formally. Now President Obama is considering turning this still flawed but fundamentally sound social program over to tea-party backers and their ilk, those who care more about codifying current economic inequities than imagining a more just and democratic America.

For those interested in saving social security, here is one way to make your voice heard:

<http://www.sanders.senate.gov/petition/?uid=36ab3bec-a656-4678-82d3-ca7c116b0ee6>

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