

ABSTRACT

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT OF 1935

This paper examines the relationship between Franklin D. Roosevelt and the development of the Social Security Act (SSA) of 1935. Efforts for old-age pensions preceded Roosevelt. However, a national old-age pension program was not realized until after he was elected President in 1932. The Social Security program that included old-age pensions was shaped by Roosevelt's moderate political ideology. He called for a conservatively structured old-age pension program that would be funded by regressive taxes.

Why did Roosevelt choose such a conservative structure for a progressive reform like Social Security? President Roosevelt's political moderation led to the contradiction between the progressive goals of the SSA and its regressive taxation. Roosevelt did not settle for a moderate solution. He wanted the SSA to be conservatively structured, because its goals were clearly progressive.

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