

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 15, 2011

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We are writing to urge that in the upcoming negotiations for a budget bill for Fiscal Year 2011, you as Speaker move the House in the direction of protecting the essential operating budget of the Social Security Administration (SSA). H.R. 1, the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, previously passed by the House, cut SSA's operating budget by \$1.7 billion below the level needed to provide basic service to the public. SSA estimates that a cut of that magnitude could force it to shut down for up to four weeks. A shutdown of that length would delay SSA's processing of benefit applications for nearly 700,000 new retirees, widows, disabled workers, and children; add to the already unacceptable number of unprocessed disability appeals hearings; and prevent SSA from answering nearly 8 million phone calls from current and future beneficiaries. Social Security didn't cause the current deficits and the services provided by SSA are indispensable.

For nearly 54 million Americans, Social Security is the bedrock of economic security. The benefits are modest, averaging about \$14,000 a year. But for six out of ten recipients, that is more than half of their income. Current Social Security beneficiaries depend on SSA to answer their questions, correct errors in their checks, and make sure their money is sent to the right bank account. The 160 million workers who are paying into Social Security depend on SSA to keep their wage records updated and to process their applications for benefits promptly when they become eligible. Millions of families depend on SSA to issue Social Security numbers to their new babies so that they, too, can receive the family protections provided by Social Security.

In addition to the impact on current and future beneficiaries, the cuts in H.R. 1 would actually cost taxpayers money by failing to fully fund SSA's fight against waste, fraud, and abuse. Although only a very small percentage of beneficiaries are receiving benefits in error or in the wrong amounts, the savings from correcting those overpayments are substantial – a return on investment of \$7 to \$10 for every dollar we invest. The cuts in H.R. 1 alone would prevent SSA from recovering between \$196 million and \$280 million in overpayments – money that belongs to the Social Security trust fund and the workers who contribute to it.

Americans of all ages are counting on us to stand up for Social Security and not undermine its ability to pay promised benefits and serve the public. We ask you to join us in taking a firm stand on protecting SSA's ability to provide critical services to Americans.

Sincerely,

Charles Schumer

Rosa DeLauro

Frank D. Lautenberg

John B. Larson

Michael H. Mack

Don O. Paterson

James E. Clyburn

John P. ...

Al ...

George Miller

Jim M. ...

Erin Van Hollen

Pete Stark

John ...

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Mary L. Ackerman

Steven A. Nathan

Joy McNay

Murray Kaptur

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Marcie L. Dodge

Arnold E. Zimmelf

Jim McFinn

Jean Altmore

Donna F. Edwards

Kurt Schneider

Trif Y

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Kathy Costa

David W. Culline

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Brian E. Eick

Corrine Brown

Lorna M. Gustafson

Grace S. Napolitano

Raul M. Grijalva

Paul Campbell

Betty Sutton

Michael Michaels

Anna A. Davis

Betty Mollum

Jay C. Peter

Earl Blumenauer

Judy Ann

Ch R

Betty King

Yvette D. Clarke

Daniel Lipinski

Michael M. Turner

Nitin Kumar

Charles B. Dangel

James L. Bann

Julio L.

Jimmy Costello

Loetta J. J.

David Jackson

Cadyn B. Maloney

Linda J. Sam

Dis C.

John Long

Dennis J. Kucinski

Maureen H.

abs B.

Bob Fik

Shirley K.

Lucille Royal-Allard

Benny Frank

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Rubin H.

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Red Trench

Leonard L Boswell

Keith Elleri

Levi Lowell

John W Allen

Sam Tan

Rush Holt

Jim M

Harmon Clarke

Agua Bialak

Zoe L

Ron Kind

Mazie Hirono

Tina Ryan

Harold Johnson

Emanuel Leander

Charles A. Zang

Pats R. P.

Gleason Howard

Danny K. Davis

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Jim Moran

Lynn Woolsey

Ken V. Catterino

Bill Pasarell Jr

Joe Brown

Carolyn McCarthy

John P. Xand

Brian Higgins

Gene H.

Laurie M. Shugrue

Ed Pastor

Al Green

Scott R.

Colin E. Urdice

~~John~~

L. M.

Shelley Berkley

Bu A L

Fredenka Skulson

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

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Paul D. Torke

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Ch. Dyle

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Mike McFortyre

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Lair Capps

John Russell

Barbara Lee

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The Honorable Jason Altmire
The Honorable Joe Baca
The Honorable Karen Bass
The Honorable Xavier Becerra
The Honorable Shelley Berkley
The Honorable Howard L. Berman
The Honorable Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
The Honorable Timothy Bishop
The Honorable Earl Blumenauer
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The Honorable Robert A. Brady
The Honorable Corrine Brown
The Honorable Lois Capps
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The Honorable Russ Carnahan
The Honorable André Carson
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The Honorable Barney Frank
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The Honorable Charles A. Gonzalez
The Honorable Al Green
The Honorable Gene Green
The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva

The Honorable Luis V. Gutierrez
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The Honorable Maurice D. Hinchey
The Honorable Ruben Hinojosa
The Honorable Mazie Hirono
The Honorable Rush D. Holt
The Honorable Michael M. Honda
The Honorable Steve Israel
The Honorable Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
The Honorable Henry C. “Hank” Johnson
The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
The Honorable Dale E. Kildee
The Honorable Ron Kind
The Honorable Dennis J. Kucinich
The Honorable John B. Larson
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The Honorable John Lewis
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The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
The Honorable Doris O. Matsui
The Honorable Carolyn McCarthy
The Honorable Betty McCollum

The Honorable Jim McDermott

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The Honorable Mike McIntyre

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The Honorable George Miller

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The Honorable Kurt Schrader

The Honorably David Scott

The Honorable Robert C. “Bobby” Scott

The Honorable Terri A. Sewell

The Honorable Albio Sires

The Honorable Louise McIntosh Slaughter

The Honorable Fortney Pete Stark

The Honorable Betty Sutton

The Honorable Paul D. Tonko

The Honorable Edolphus Towns

The Honorable Niki Tsongas

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, Jr.

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz

The Honorable Peter Welch

The Honorable Frederica S. Wilson

The Honorable Lynn C. Woolsey

The Honorable David Wu

The Honorable John A. Yarmuth