

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 18, 2015

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman, Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services Subcommittee
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Labor, Health
and Human Services Subcommittee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the 168 million Americans who currently pay into Social Security and the more than 64 million who receive benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA), we urge you to provide Social Security with \$12.7 billion, as requested in the President's budget, the budget needed to deliver benefits on time, in full, and in the right amount. At that budget level, SSA's administrative costs would represent 1.3 percent of the total cost of the benefits it administers, a very cost-effective level.

For most Americans, Social Security is the heart of economic security. As leaders of the Committee and Subcommittees with jurisdiction over the programs administered by SSA, we have seen that inadequate funding jeopardizes Social Security's mission of allowing American workers to earn protection for themselves and their families.

With the aging of the Baby Boomers, the number of Americans receiving Social Security has grown by more than 10 million over the past decade, yet SSA has less funding for operating costs today than it had in 2010, and Americans across the country are paying the price. Americans who call Social Security to resolve a problem or find out information wait an average of 22 minutes for service, and disabled workers are waiting longer for their earned benefits. In fact, much of the reduction in waiting times for appeals has been lost, due to several years of budget cuts. Even with recent service restorations, Social

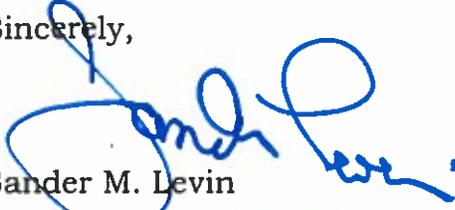
Security still has 7 percent less front-line staff than it had five years ago, and is open to the public four fewer hours each week. The bottom line is that SSA does not have the resources needed to process the rising workloads and make prompt decisions on applications for disability benefits.

There's no excuse for underfunding SSA. As you know, the cost of processing Social Security benefit applications and safeguarding Social Security comes from workers contributions to the Social Security Trust Funds, not the general budget. The Social Security Trust Funds have a balance of \$2.8 trillion, generated entirely by worker contributions, which can only be used for benefit payments and administrative costs. Over its lifetime, Social Security has collected \$18 trillion and paid out \$15.2 trillion in benefits and operating costs.

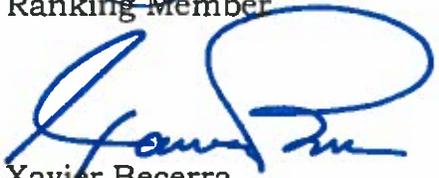
We also strongly urge you to continue providing SSA with the full budget for program integrity scheduled by the Budget Control Act. As you know, taxpayers have lost nearly a billion dollars to fraud and errors that could have been prevented had those funds not been blocked in 2012 and 2013.

Thank you very much for your attention to our concerns. We look forward to working with you both to protect Social Security for all Americans.

Sincerely,



Sander M. Levin
Ranking Member



Xavier Becerra
Ranking Member
Social Security Subcommittee



Lloyd Doggett
Ranking Member
Human Resources Subcommittee