

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

We applaud your work to address the economic relief that Americans desperately need during this national crisis. Given the severity of this moment, we know Congress will, without a doubt, offer subsequent proposals to stimulate the U.S. economy.

The undersigned organizations representing seniors, women, communities of color, labor, people with disabilities, and veterans strongly support protecting Social Security's vital benefits that provide—and will continue to provide—economic security for millions of American families. As you consider economic relief legislation, we urge Congress to stand firm in protecting Social Security by opposing any effort to cut the program's dedicated revenue, the federal insurance contribution (FICA).

Decreasing or fully eliminating the FICA undermines the foundation of our Social Security system and sets the stage for future demands to cut Social Security, even if the proposal replaces the lost revenue with deficit-funded general revenue. By law, Social Security can only pay benefits if its dedicated revenue is sufficient to cover all the costs of those benefits and their related administrative expenses. Social Security has no borrowing authority and therefore cannot add a penny to the federal deficit. By replacing Social Security revenue with general funds, Congress risks contributing to the misconception that Social Security needs to be cut, because it adds to the deficit. Not replacing the revenue would, likewise, be destructive and increase Social Security's projected shortfall, which is also used as an excuse to try to cut Social Security's modest benefits.

This moment is unprecedented in our lifetime. We strongly encourage a significant economic relief for workers and families across America during this moment of crisis. There are much more targeted and fairer proposals than cutting FICA. Creative proposals will provide greater economic stimulus, ensure that people with very low incomes (or who are not currently employed) also receive income supports, place no administrative burden on employers, and will not undermine the economic security of America's working families by cutting their federal insurance contributions—the premiums that they pay to insure their wages against loss in the event of old age, disability, or death.

Our government should swiftly enact legislation to support American families without undermining Social Security by slashing its dedicated revenue. Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Social Security Works
Action Center on Race and the Economy
AFL-CIO
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
B'nai B'rith International
Campaign for America's Future
Economic Opportunity Institute
Gray Panthers
Justice in Aging
Labor Campaign for Single Payer
Latinos for a Secure Retirement
MoveOn
NAACP
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Employment Law Project
National Organization for Women
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
Paralyzed Veterans of America
The Arc of the United States
Women's Institute For A Secure Retirement