



SOCIAL SECURITY WORKS  
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March 5, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

On behalf of our 2 million supporters and over 64 million Social Security beneficiaries, Social Security Works is writing to reiterate our urgent request that you immediately remove Commissioner Andrew M. Saul and Deputy Commissioner David Black of the Social Security Administration. As we wrote to you in our [Transition Report](#), Mr. Saul and Mr. Black have brought great harm to the Social Security Administration (SSA) during their tenure. Since the release of our report, we have learned even more worrisome details about the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, which warrant their prompt removal. To reverse the damage that they have caused and restore trust in the agency, we strongly urge you to remove Commissioner Saul and Deputy Commissioner Black today.

Social Security Works has had major concerns about Commissioner Saul and Deputy Commissioner Black since their nomination by the previous Administration. Prior to his appointment as Commissioner, Andrew Saul had no previous work experience related to Social Security or SSA and lacked a deep knowledge of Social Security. Mr. Saul has also displayed questionable character, which forced him to drop out of a race for a New York Congressional seat.

Likewise, Mr. Black, despite his extensive time working in the agency, is not an advocate for our Social Security system or for the agency workforce. During his time at the Office of the General Counsel, Mr. Black led efforts to undermine the workers' union (efforts that have intensified during his tenure as Deputy Commissioner, as described below), making it impossible for union representatives to fulfill their responsibilities to the employees. At the same time, the Office of the General Counsel reversed policies designed to protect the rights of working families when they claimed their earned benefits.

Unfortunately, since confirmation, Mr. Saul and Mr. Black have made a habit of undermining our Social Security system and the SSA federal workforce. Under their leadership, SSA workers' rights were undermined with consistent anti-worker and anti-union behavior. SSA leadership intentionally negotiated in bad faith with the unions representing SSA workers. After an impossible negotiation, the Trump Administration imposed contracts on the unions that greatly damaged the unions' ability to represent their members. Commissioner Saul, in particular, has

shown [complete disregard for the workforce](#) by ending a popular telework program in 2019 while at the same time, working from New York rather than at SSA headquarters in Baltimore.

On top of their horrible treatment of the SSA workforce, Saul and Black engineered and implemented policies to quietly dismantle the protections of Social Security for some of the most vulnerable Americans. Just this past January they tried to push through a cruel regulation that would have led to people with disabilities wrongfully getting pushed out of the Social Security system.

To effectuate your Social Security agenda, it is imperative to have the Social Security leadership support it. Saul and Black emphatically do not. Their terms of years serve as an impediment to their replacement. Despite the Deputy Commissioner's term of years, nothing in the statute prevents the new Administration from removing the occupant.

While the statute does specify that the Commissioner can only be removed for "neglect of duty or malfeasance," he has provided numerous examples of both. His dereliction of duty has caused the workforce he supervises to vote no confidence in him. Most recently, a whistleblower has filed a complaint with the Inspector General that the Commissioner has been pressuring the independent administrative law judges to find against meritorious claims. The complaint is backed up by numerous stories from individual administrative law judges who have told Social Security Works that they have, indeed, felt such pressure. The accuracy of the whistleblower claim is further backed up by efforts by Commissioner Saul to replace independent law judges with adjudicators he can control.

For all these reasons, we believe you must move quickly to dismiss Commissioner Saul and Deputy Commissioner Black. They have shown that they cannot be trusted at the helm of the Social Security Administration. They do not share your vision for a strengthened and expanded Social Security system. We would be happy to meet with your staff to discuss this matter further, as well as to offer suggestions for a more qualified Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner nominee.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you soon.

Sincerely,



Alex Lawson  
Executive Director