



SOCIAL SECURITY WORKS
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August 31, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal
372 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Danny Davis
2159 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Neal and Chairman Davis:

On behalf of the over 2.5 million Social Security beneficiaries who depend on Supplemental Security Income (SSI), we strongly urge you to update and improve SSI in the upcoming reconciliation package.

When Congress enacted SSI, it stated that its purpose was “to provide a positive assurance that the Nation's aged, blind, and disabled people **would no longer have to subsist on below-poverty-level incomes.**” (Emphasis added.) SSI today is failing that stated goal.

While the program’s intent is to lift Americans out of poverty, those who receive SSI today struggle to make ends meet and often live well below the federal poverty line. For fifty years, Congress has largely ignored this vital program. In fact, many of the program’s provisions have never been updated in the five decades since SSI was signed into law.

Congress has before it an historic opportunity. Now is the time for Congress to use this reconciliation process to make good on the stated goal. It is time to update and expand SSI so that it can be the lifeline that it was intended to be.

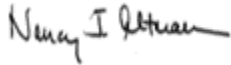
President Biden ran on improving SSI. Including his improvements in the reconciliation package would be fulfilling his campaign promise. They include increasing the SSI federal maximum benefit level; updating and indexing the resource limits; updating and indexing the income disregards; eliminating the marriage penalties; and eliminating the In-Kind Support and Maintenance provisions. They are part of the SSI Restoration Act of 2021, which has been cosponsored by 49 House members – about 20 percent of the Democratic caucus.

We know that the Ways and Means Committee has many priorities to deal with as part of reconciliation. President Biden’s SSI improvements will work synergistically with those other priorities. Most of the SSI reforms have relatively little cost, when compared to the overall cost

of the bill, but will have an oversized impact, both in improving people's lives and reducing administrative costs. Congress can and should improve SSI while also expanding Medicare and investing in Home and Community-Based Services, along with so many other priorities.

We are confident you are working to create a reconciliation package that will improve the lives of seniors and people with disabilities. We hope the final bill includes these desperately needed SSI improvements. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Altman
President



Alex Lawson
Executive Director