

**National
Committee to
Preserve
Social Security
and Medicare**



**Barbara B.
Kennelly
President &
Chief Executive
Officer**

November 29, 2006

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Finance Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley:

On behalf of the 4.6 million members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I would like to express our strong opposition to the nomination of Andrew Biggs to serve as the Deputy Commissioner of Social Security. We believe that, in nominating someone with Mr. Biggs' history of active advocacy for Social Security privatization, the President has provided the most definitive evidence to date of his continuing commitment to private accounts. If confirmed to the agency's second-highest position, Mr. Biggs will be ideally situated to advance the President's privatization agenda and undermine our nation's most successful social insurance program.

Mr. Biggs has been a committed proponent of privatization both prior to, and during, his tenure as an official in the Bush Administration and has a history of using his position with the Social Security Administration as a platform for advancing private accounts. Mr. Biggs served as the Deputy Director of the CATO Institute's Project on Social Security Privatization where he wrote numerous articles touting Social Security private accounts. In 2001, he took a leave from CATO to serve as a staff member of the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security – a Commission whose mission was to design a system of Social Security private accounts. In 2003, as Associate Commissioner of Social Security for Retirement Policy he was a vocal advocate for Social Security privatization. In point of fact, Mr. Biggs was such an ardent promoter of the President's plan in that position that questions were raised as to whether he had violated a federal ban on congressional lobbying by federal employees.

Not only are we troubled by Mr. Biggs' history of direct advocacy for Social Security privatization, we are also concerned that installing proponents of private accounts into key Social Security Administration positions will damage the agency's mission in other, more subtle, ways. A review of the public materials that have emanated from the Social Security Administration over the course of the Bush Administration reveals a wealth of carefully crafted rhetoric which weakens public confidence in Social Security and plays into the hands of those who would replace its guaranteed benefits with a privatized system. Promoting someone with Andrew Biggs' policy history to be Deputy Commissioner of Social Security when he has spent much of his career attempting to privatize, and as a result destroy, the program would be a disservice to the millions Social Security serves.

We believe Mr. Biggs' long and enthusiastic promotion of private accounts should disqualify him for the position of Deputy Commissioner, and we urge you to reject his nomination if it is submitted by the President in the 110th Congress.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly
President and CEO