



10 G Street NE
Suite 600
Washington DC 20002-4215
202-216-0420
800-966-1935
www.ncpssm.org

March 11, 2008

The United House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to urge you to support the Fiscal Year 2009 House Budget Resolution (H. Con. Res. 312) when it comes to the House Floor for a vote this week. This Resolution would prevent the devastating and massive cuts to programs serving older Americans proposed by President Bush in his Fiscal Year 2009 budget.

In his annual budget, President Bush continues his quest to privatize Social Security by proposing to spend \$30 billion in FY 2009 (and \$647 billion over the next 10 years) to create Social Security private accounts. In addition, the President's budget includes an endorsement of progressive price indexing, an initiative that would result in severe benefit cuts to future beneficiaries. We strongly support the FY 2009 House Budget Resolution's rejection of the President's attempt to privatize Social Security.

The President's budget also proposed dangerous cuts to Medicare, totaling \$178 billion over the next five years, \$556 billion over the next 10 years, and more than \$10 trillion over the next 75 years. These cuts increase beneficiary cost-sharing and slash reimbursement rates to providers who serve beneficiaries in traditional Medicare. These destructive cuts are also rejected in the House Budget Resolution.

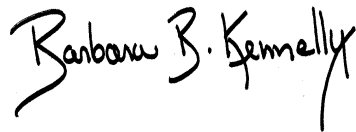
In addition to preserving traditional Medicare by rejecting the Administration's harmful cuts to the program, the House Budget Resolution accommodates important improvements to Medicare. First, the Resolution assumes the extension of Medicare premium assistance for qualified individuals with low incomes and limited financial resources. In addition, the Resolution contains a reserve fund to accommodate legislation for Medicare program improvements, such as: increasing the Medicare reimbursement rate for physicians while holding beneficiaries harmless from associated premium increases; providing greater access to preventive benefits; and enhancing assistance for low-income beneficiaries. Further, the Resolution includes instructions for the Committee on Ways and Means to produce a bill that would reduce mandatory spending (except Social Security) by \$750 million over six years. We strongly urge the Committee to achieve the Medicare savings contemplated by the Budget Resolution by eliminating excessive subsidies to private Medicare Advantage plans.

We support the FY 2009 Budget Resolution's addition of \$240 million in discretionary funding for program integrity initiatives of the Social Security Administration (SSA). These resources, combined with the \$10.327 billion provided for SSA in the Resolution, will help address the unacceptable level of hearing backlogs and the increased workload as baby boomers become eligible for Social Security benefits.

We also appreciate that the FY 2009 Budget Resolution rejects the President's cut to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Under the President's budget, LIHEAP funding would be reduced \$570 million from the FY 2008 level. As energy prices continue to rise, low-income seniors devote a disproportionate share of their income to home energy needs. Without the assistance of this vital program, the lives of countless seniors could be in danger during times of excessive heat or cold.

We applaud Chairman Spratt and Members of the United States House Committee on the Budget for producing a FY 2009 Budget Resolution that rejects the harmful cuts contained in the Administration's budget. Once again, we strongly urge you to support the FY 2009 Budget Resolution which will protect and improve the programs that successfully serve our nation's seniors.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara B. Kennelly". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara B. Kennelly
President and CEO