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January 23, 2009

The United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I urge you to support providing relief to America's seniors as part of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*.

The National Committee is a grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the financial security and health of maturing Americans. Our primary means to achieve this end is through the preservation and strengthening of Social Security and Medicare, but our support for these programs is rooted, in part, in a broader concern for the economic vitality of seniors.

The *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* is intended to help pull our economy out of recession through job creation, and to help America's families weather the economic downturn. The legislation currently being considered by Congress provides for reductions in payroll withholding to deliver benefits to workers. As an organization representing millions of seniors and their families, the National Committee is concerned that providing assistance in this manner leaves out a significant group of Americans who are also suffering in these hard economic times – non-working seniors of modest means who are living primarily on their Social Security benefits.

Although this group of America's seniors may not be employed, they face many of the same economic strains as working families every day. In fact, they frequently confront increased prices for goods and services with little ability to increase their existing incomes. In addition, a higher portion of older consumers' income is spent on health care than that of other demographic groups. As these costs rise faster than Social Security's Cost-of-Living-Adjustments, seniors are left with reduced amounts of income to spend on other life necessities.

Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus has unveiled an original Chairman's Mark that includes a one-time payment of \$300 to Social Security beneficiaries, Railroad Retirement and SSI recipients, and to veterans receiving disability compensation and pension benefits from the US Department of Veterans' Affairs. We applaud Senator Baucus' understanding of seniors' needs, and thank him for including these critical groups of Americans in his proposal.

Non-working seniors are important contributors to economic growth and should not be forgotten in the debate on how to pull our economy out of recession. We urge you to support providing recovery relief to America's seniors in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly  
President and CEO