



February 7, 2013

United States 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 urge you to sign the letter to President Obama from Reps. Jan Schakowsky, Keith Ellison, John Conyers, Donna Edwards, and Raul Grijalva opposing cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid in any legislation to replace sequestration. Earned Social Security and Medicare benefits provide financial and health protections necessary to keep individuals and families out of poverty, and Medicaid is a crucial safety net for low-income children, pregnant women, people with disabilities, and elderly individuals. Subjecting these programs to benefit cuts will jeopardize the well-being of millions of Americans.

Social Security is the most successful income security program in our nation's history. It is an important economic lifeline for millions of America's most vulnerable people, including seniors and persons with disabilities, as well as their spouses, dependents, and survivors. Social Security has not contributed to the federal debt, and therefore does not belong in a conversation about deficit reduction. Proposals that would use the "chained" Consumer Price Index (CPI) to calculate Social Security benefits cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) would reduce projected benefits for the oldest and most vulnerable Americans, often older women, who would be least able to afford it. The Social Security Administration estimates that application of the chained CPI would result in a decrease of about \$130 per year (0.9 percent) in Social Security benefits for a typical 65 year-old, and \$1,400 per year (9.2 percent) by the time that senior reaches age 95.

Similarly, proposals to increase Medicare beneficiary cost sharing— such as increasing the Part B deductible and requiring a home health copayment— could lead many seniors to forego necessary care resulting in more serious and costly health conditions. Increasing the age of eligibility for Medicare would reduce federal Medicare spending by shifting costs to others. Older adults, aged 65 and 66, would face an average of \$2,200 per year in higher out-of-pocket costs. Even with Medicare, health care is very expensive for older Americans. With half of Medicare beneficiaries having incomes below \$22,000 per year, many cannot afford to pay more for health care. Cutting Medicare benefits will simply force many to postpone needed care until their conditions deteriorate and become much more expensive to treat. Likewise, reductions to Medicaid funding would negatively impact low-income seniors, many of whom have spent their life savings to pay for long-term care. Older adults and people with disabilities account for two-thirds of all Medicaid spending, and Medicaid pays for about 62 percent of all long-term services and supports.

Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are vital to the economic and health security of millions of senior Americans. Any changes in these programs should be made based on what is best for the programs and their beneficiaries, and not what is expedient for reducing America's deficit. We encourage Congress to focus on improving the economy, creating jobs and providing economic equity for all Americans and to reject proposals that would hurt millions of middle class and poor Americans who depend on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Therefore, I urge you to sign the letter to the President from Reps. Jan Schakowsky, Keith Ellison, John Conyers, Donna Edwards, and Raul Grijalva, which opposes proposals

to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits in future deficit reduction and sequestration replacement legislation.

If you have any questions or would like to sign the letter, please contact Megan Michaud in Rep. Schakowsky's office (megan.michaud@mail.house.gov or 5-2111).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Richtman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Max Richtman
President and CEO