

December 14, 2012

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 am writing to urge you to cosponsor a bill that Senator Tom Harkin has authored, S. 3680, entitled the “Making Work Pay Tax Credit Act of 2013” (MWPTC).

The MWPTC, which was first enacted as part of the “Recovery Act of 2009,” is a progressive and cost effective tool for stimulating the economy that boosts the income of low-and middle-income taxpayers. As important from our perspective, Senator Harkin’s bill would obviate the need for extending the 2-percent Social Security payroll tax cut.

Since its inception two years ago, the National Committee has been deeply concerned about the effect this so-called tax cut would have on Social Security. We said then that there is no such thing as a temporary tax cut, and the experience of the past two years has only too vividly corroborated our point. We regarded a one-year interruption in the program’s funding to be highly undesirable. When the tax cut was extended for a second year, we said that it was another step down a path that would permanently devastate the historic manner in which the Social Security program has been funded.

Supporters of Social Security have always been able to accurately maintain that the program has not contributed to the deficits that have troubled our country for so many years. That will change if Social Security becomes even partially dependent on general revenues. The needs of America’s seniors would compete with hundreds of other government programs that are funded with general revenues. The upshot: Social Security would become a target for deficit reductions just like so many other programs that provide vital assistance to America’s seniors.

Equally troubling, using general revenues to pay benefits, even if only in part, would weaken the earned-right nature of Social Security. This is a fundamental aspect of the program and accounts for its enduring popularity.

Senator Harkin’s bill, unlike yet another extension of the Social Security payroll tax cut, will better stimulate an economy, but without the potential to undermine Social Security. For that reason, I urge you to cosponsor S. 3680. To cosponsor, please contact Senator Harkin’s staff, Zach Steinberg, at 4-5441.

Sincerely,



Max Richtman
President and CEO