

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2011

President Barack Obama  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The Congressional Task Force on Seniors is committed to protecting the financial security, health, and well-being of America's seniors. As members of the Task Force, we want to thank you for your leadership in fighting for those priorities and urge you to continue to oppose harmful cuts, or reductions in benefits, to programs that benefit older Americans, specifically in Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. At a time when older Americans are less secure in their retirement and less able to afford quality health services, now is not the time to cut their benefits.

America's seniors are facing increasing financial hardships, exacerbated by the loss of defined benefit pensions, the erosion of retirement savings, and two years without any cost-of-living increase in Social Security benefits. The average senior citizen in America lives on a fixed income of slightly more than \$19,000 a year. Two-thirds of retirees rely on Social Security for more than half of their income, one-third for 90 percent or more – yet Social Security retiree benefits average \$14,000 a year, \$2,000 less for women. Although over 90 percent of seniors saved for retirement, less than half have been able to save more than \$50,000. With the cost of daily basic necessities such as groceries, gas, and medical care on the rise, many of America's senior citizens are simply unable to afford further financial strains.

As older Americans rely on Social Security, they also rely on Medicare and Medicaid for their health and long-term care needs. Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, we took measures to lower health care costs without cutting benefits or increasing cost-sharing requirement. While we can make more improvements, we must not abandon that commitment. Proposals to raise out-of-pocket costs, cut benefits, or reduce federal Medicaid spending would have negative impact on current enrollees, their families, and our economy as a whole.

We fully understand the fiscal crisis our nation faces. We stand ready to work with you, our colleagues across the aisle, and the Senate to develop and implement a package that both ensures that the United States does not default on its loans and responsibly reduces the federal debt. As we approach the 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of Medicare and Medicaid, and the 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the passage of Social Security, we are confident that, through your leadership and commitment to the wellbeing of older Americans, a deal can be struck that does not negatively impact the lives of America's seniors.

Sincerely,

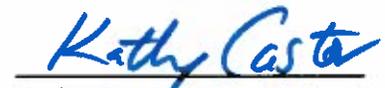
  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

  
Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress

  
Joe Baca  
Member of Congress

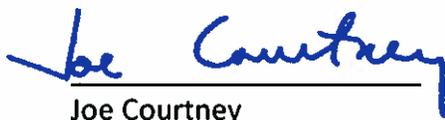
  
Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

  
Leonard Boswell  
Member of Congress

  
Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

  
Donna Christensen  
Member of Congress

  
John Conyers  
Member of Congress

  
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

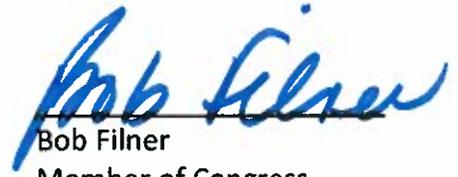
  
Mark Critz  
Member of Congress

  
Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress

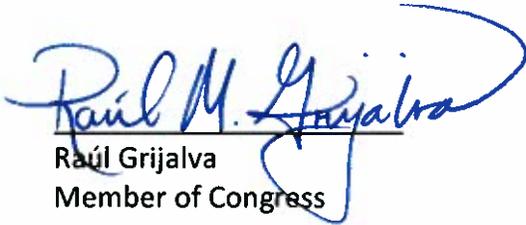
  
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress



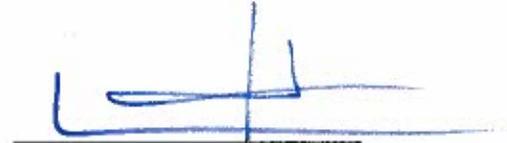
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Bob Filner  
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa  
Member of Congress



Mazie Hirono  
Member of Congress



Kathy Hochul  
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Hank Johnson  
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Bill Pascrell  
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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
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Linda Sanchez  
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John Sarbanes  
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Bobby Scott  
Member of Congress



Albio Sires  
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Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



Betty Sutton  
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



Henry Waxman  
Member of Congress

*Carolyn McCarthy*

Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress

*Gerald E. Connolly*  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerald E. Connolly". The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature, there is a horizontal line that extends to the right and then curves downwards and back to the left, ending under the "y" of the signature.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John B. Larson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress