

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2025

Frank J. Bisignano
Commissioner
U.S. Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Bisignano:

We write to express our strong opposition to the Administration's plan to sharply reduce or eliminate age as a factor in determinations for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits, and to overhaul vocational rules in ways which will deny benefits to many people age 50 and older who have acquired severe, documented impairments after a lifetime of work. This plan has the potential to be one of the most sweeping and devastating cuts to Social Security ever made.

The proposal under consideration would reportedly slash access to Social Security disability benefits by either removing age as an eligibility factor entirely, or raising the threshold to age 60.¹ Independent analysis finds that even a 10 percent cut in eligibility would result in roughly three quarters of a million fewer people receiving disability benefits over the next decade, tens of thousands fewer widows and children receiving auxiliary benefits, and about \$82 billion less paid out. Removing or reducing age protections may also push more older, disabled workers into early retirement at age 62, locking in lifelong benefits that are substantially lower than Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI).²

By law, the Social Security Administration (SSA) must consider age, education, and work experience when evaluating a person's disability. However, these factors alone do not grant eligibility: to qualify under the Social Security Act, a person must have a severe disability that not only prevents them from doing their prior job, but also from working in any job in the national economy. SSA only considers age and other vocational factors if an applicant's severe disability has been established. Age is critical because adaptability to new skills and new jobs generally decreases with age, just as the severity of effects from impairment increases with age.³

The Administration's rationale for removing age protections for older, severely disabled workers or imposing other restrictions is unclear. Eligibility standards are already extremely stringent, with only about one in three applicants qualifying after providing extensive medical evidence and a rigorous evaluation process.⁴ SSA applies these standards rigorously, and the number of SSDI and SSI disability benefit recipients is at a 20-year low.⁵

We are alarmed that, if implemented, this proposal would be a 100% benefit cut for any older workers with disabilities who could be denied or thrown off Social Security or SSI benefits. The typical SSDI beneficiary is age 56, and many beneficiaries have worked physically demanding jobs in sectors like mining, construction, or manufacturing.^{6,7} Payments average only about \$19,000 a year for SSDI and \$9,000 a year for SSI, and

¹ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/10/05/disability-social-security-age-benefits/>

² <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/updating-social-security-disability>.

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/10/05/disability-social-security-age-benefits/>

⁴ www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/di_asr/2023/sect04.html and https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_asr/2023/sect10.html

⁵ <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/STATS/OASDIbenies.html> and https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/ssi_asr/2023/sect01.html#table3

⁶ https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast_facts/2025/fast_facts25.html#pagei

⁷ www.cbpp.org/research/geographic-pattern-of-disability-receipt-largely-reflects-economic-and-demographic-factors

beneficiaries typically rely on these modest amounts for most or all of their income to cover housing, food, out-of-pocket medical bills, and other basics.⁸ Many of these same individuals have been left even more vulnerable after Republicans slashed Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, and WIC by over \$1.5 trillion earlier this year — and could face financial devastation without their earned Social Security benefits.⁹

This proposal comes as the Trump Administration is making extreme changes at SSA that threaten the integrity of Social Security and access to earned benefits for seniors, people with disabilities, and survivors. Massive workforce reductions and reassignments have reduced SSA's field office capacity, and our constituents increasingly report long delays and difficulty getting help with benefit applications or other services. Taken together, these actions curtail access to benefits and reduce SSA's capacity to evaluate claims fairly and promptly.

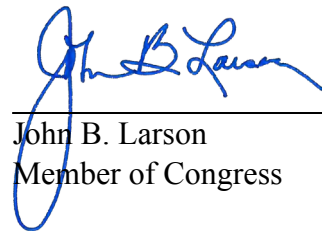
We strongly urge you to immediately halt any measure that would reduce eligibility for Social Security or SSI benefits, including ending or curtailing the consideration of age in disability determinations. If SSA adopts modern occupational data and automated tools, it must do so in a manner that preserves statutory protections for older workers and ensures that benefit decisions are adjudicated fairly with attention to all relevant factors. We also urge you to work with Congress, beneficiaries, and vocational and medical experts to implement evidence-based improvements that reduce hardship for extremely low-income applicants and beneficiaries. Finally, we urge you to halt workforce downsizing, reverse recent staffing losses, and present a plan to rebuild frontline and adjudicative capacity to eliminate backlogs and meet statutory obligations to claimants and beneficiaries.

Social Security is an earned benefit and a solemn promise. Weakening age protections while shrinking agency capacity will drive more older Americans with disabilities into poverty and ill health. Our constituents are already facing a healthcare affordability crisis, higher prices due to tariffs and economic uncertainty, and a higher net tax burden due to the Republican Big Ugly Law. We urge you to abandon unilateral changes to Social Security disability eligibility and refocus your attention on ensuring that all Americans can access their earned benefits.

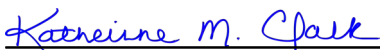
Sincerely,



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



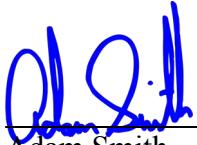
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

⁸ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/social-security-disability-insurance>

⁹ www.ccf.georgetown.edu/2025/06/06/the-one-big-beautiful-bill-act-will-mean-big-budget-hits-for-families/



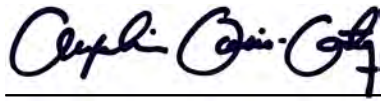
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



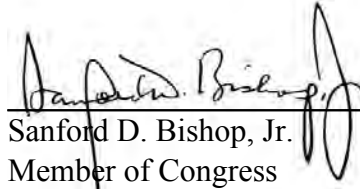
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



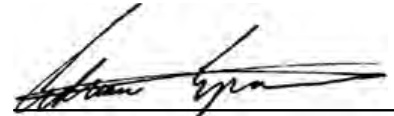
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



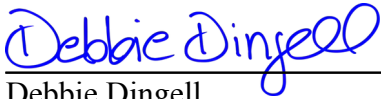
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



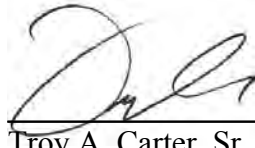
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



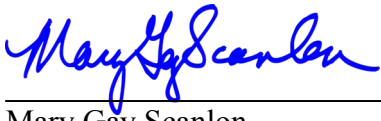
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



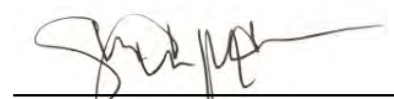
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



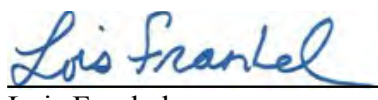
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



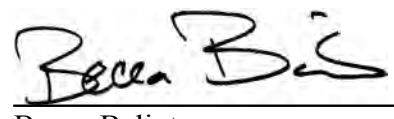
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



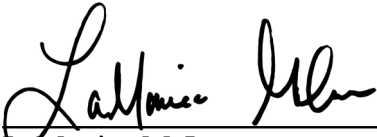
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



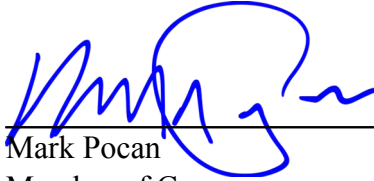
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



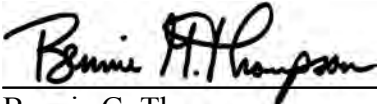
LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



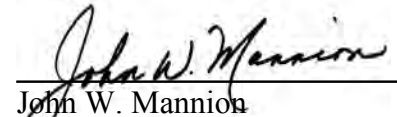
Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



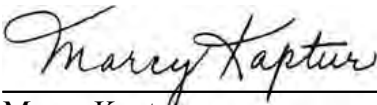
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



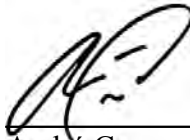
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



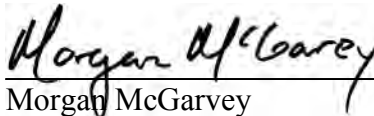
André Carson
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



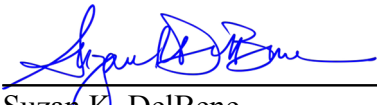
Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



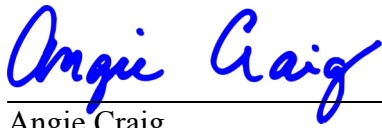
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



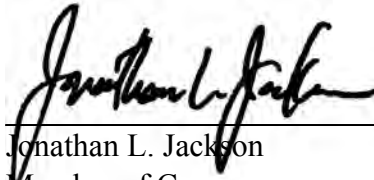
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



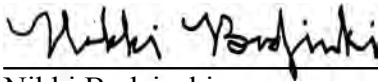
Angie Craig
Member of Congress



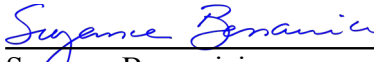
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



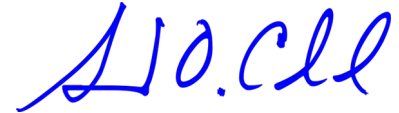
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



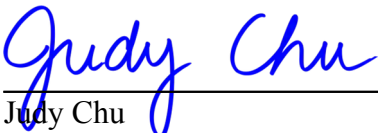
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress (OH-03)



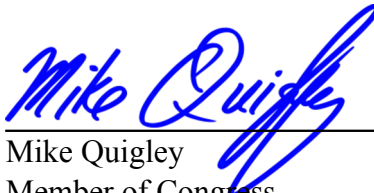
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



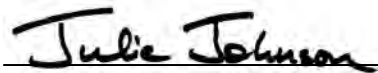
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



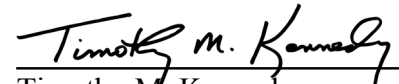
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



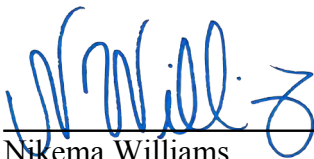
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



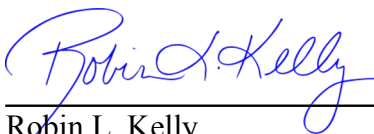
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



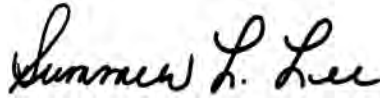
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



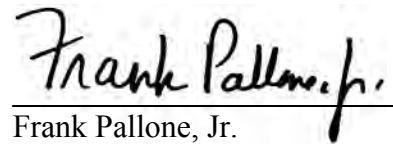
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



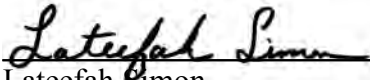
Cleo Fields
Member of Congress



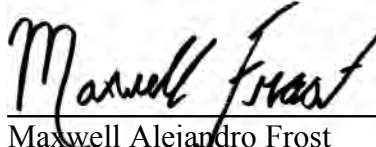
Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



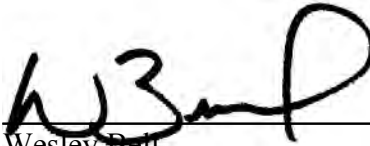
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



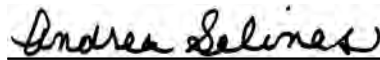
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



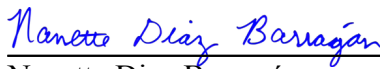
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



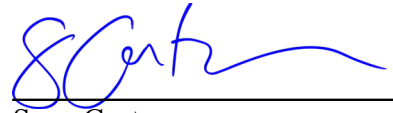
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



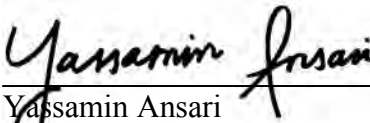
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



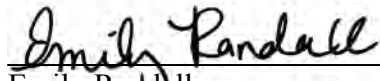
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



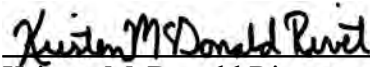
Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



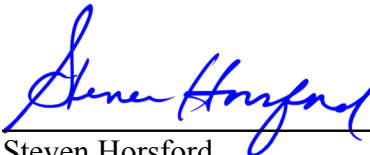
Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



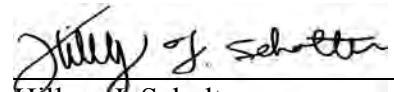
Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



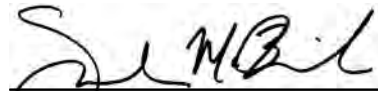
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



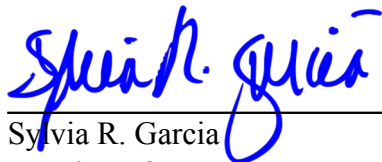
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



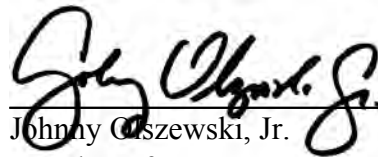
Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



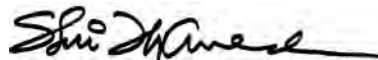
Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



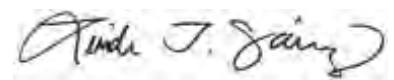
Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



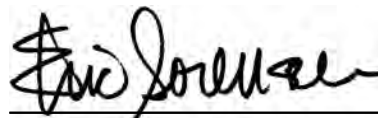
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



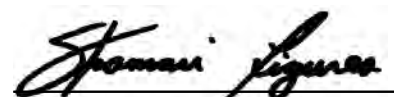
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



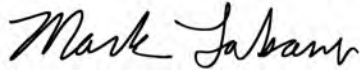
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



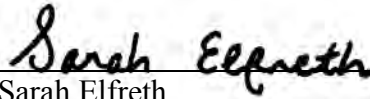
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



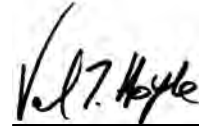
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



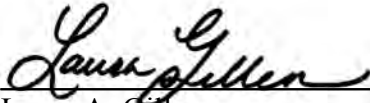
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



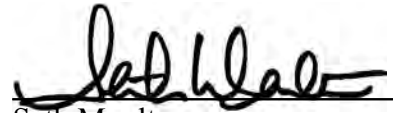
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Laura A. Gillen
Member of Congress



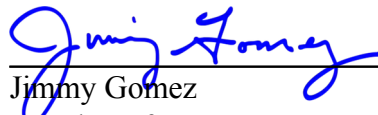
Al Green
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



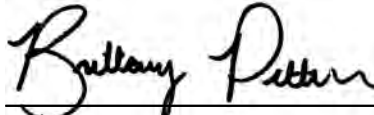
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



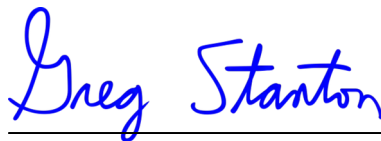
Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



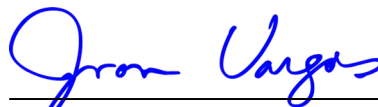
Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



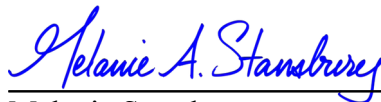
Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



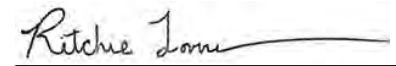
Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



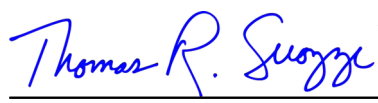
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



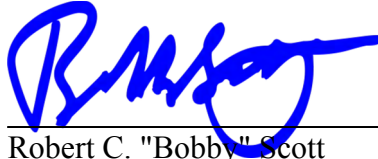
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



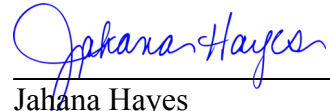
Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



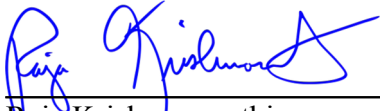
April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



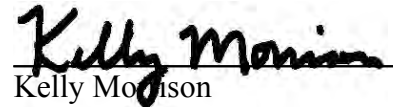
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



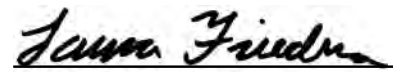
Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



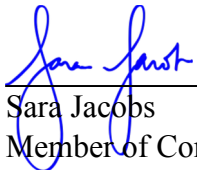
Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Josh Riley
Member of Congress



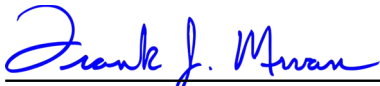
Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



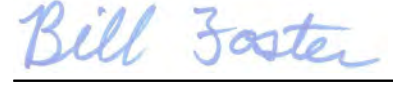
Lauren Underwood
Member of Congress



Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress



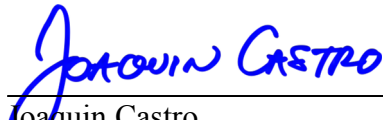
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



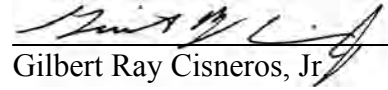
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



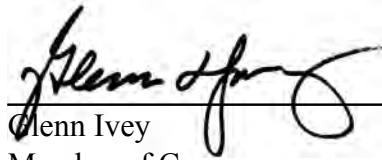
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



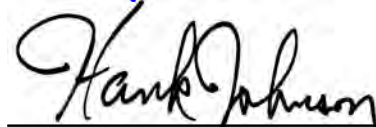
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



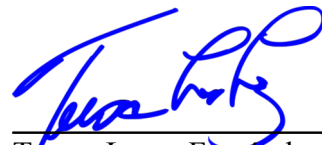
Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



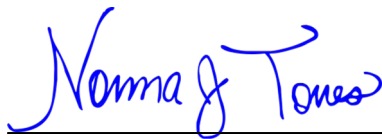
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress