

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 30, 2024

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We urge you to support the highest amount possible—no less than President Biden’s request of \$15.4 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025—for the Social Security Administration (SSA) administrative budget, to address the customer-service crisis and allow the agency to strengthen service and reduce excessive delays faced every day by Americans who are trying to access their earned benefits.

Social Security is a cornerstone of our nation’s economic security. Almost all workers are contributing to Social Security and earning its benefits, and nearly one in three households include at least one person who receives Social Security. The income Social Security provides is vital for retirees, families who have lost a breadwinner, and workers who have experienced a career-ending injury or illness. It is impossible to overstate Social Security’s importance to its 67 million beneficiaries: for most older adults, its benefits provide their largest source of income.

Despite the strong level of public support for Social Security, years of underfunding during a time of rising need have generated a customer service crisis at SSA. Since 2010, the number of Social Security beneficiaries has increased by approximately 25 percent as the baby boom generation ages. Yet SSA’s administrative funding for basic operations has fallen by approximately 19 percent, after accounting for inflation. As a result, in 2022 SSA’s staffing reached a 25-year low. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted SSA’s operations, generating significant new delays in services ranging from replacing lost or stolen Social Security cards to processing new benefit claims.

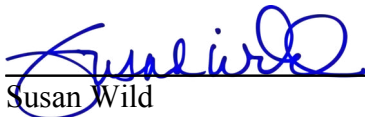
As a result, people seeking to access SSA benefits and services frequently encounter significant delays and other challenges. The majority of callers to SSA’s 1-800 number are unable to reach an agent, and those who do get through wait more than 35 minutes, on average. People scheduling a call or visit with an SSA field office to get help with an application for benefits often wait more than a month until their appointment. More than one million people are in a queue awaiting an initial decision on their application for disability benefits, and it will take SSA nearly eight months, on average, to make a decision—twice as long as in the past. These long waits can be particularly harmful for people of color, low-income applicants, and others who on average are less likely to have savings or other resources to fall back on. Thousands have died each year while waiting for a decision on whether they are eligible for disability benefits, and many more have endured years without income, in the process often exhausting their life savings and even losing their homes.

Social Security is one thing the American people should be able to count on. Yet without adequate overall funding, Americans face increasing difficulty accessing their earned benefits.

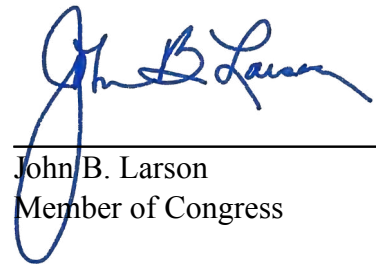
We are pleased that appropriators recognized the gravity of the customer service crisis facing SSA and provided a \$100 million boost over FY 2023 levels in the recently passed FY 2024 appropriation. However, SSA remains significantly underwater. A multi-year effort and sustained funding increases will be needed for SSA to restore service to acceptable levels. SSA has a proven track record of producing results when consistently given the resources needed to do the job. For example, dedicated funding provided by Congress for several consecutive years has helped SSA reduce delays in disability benefit hearing appeals.

Social Security is essential to American families. We urge you to support the highest amount possible, no less than President Biden's funding request for SSA in FY 2025, so Americans can receive the benefits they are counting on.

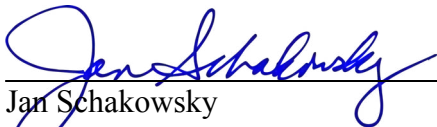
Sincerely,



Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



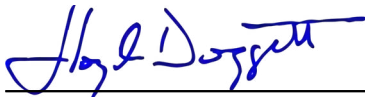
John B. Larson  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



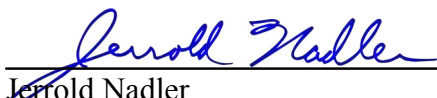
Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



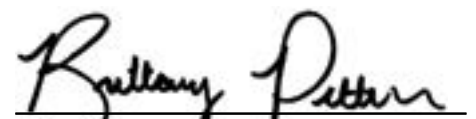
Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

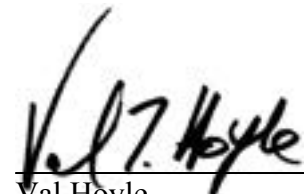


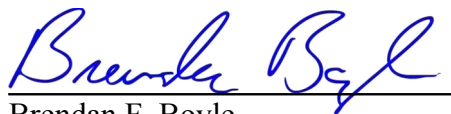
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

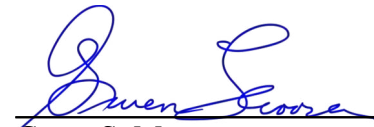



Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress


  
Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress


  
Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress

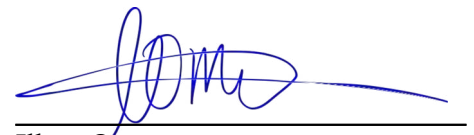
  
Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress

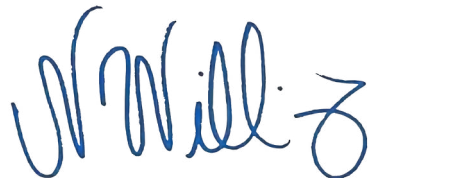
  
Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress


  
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

  
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

  
Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

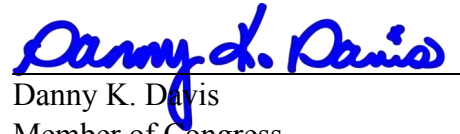
  
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

  
Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

  
Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



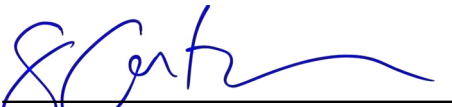
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress



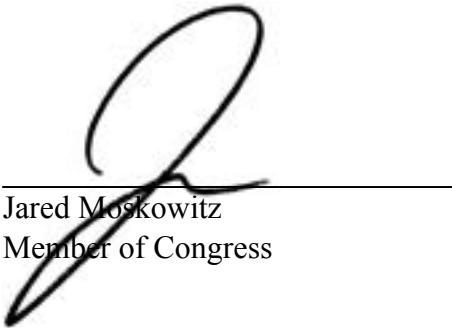
Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



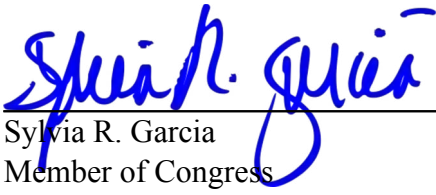
MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress



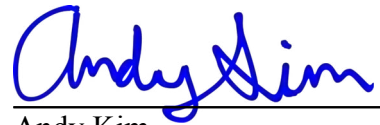
Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Andy Kim  
Member of Congress



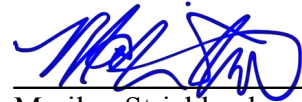
Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



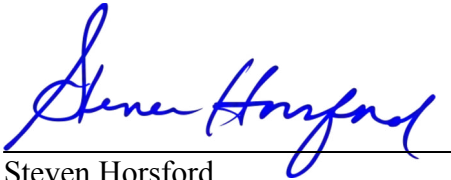
Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



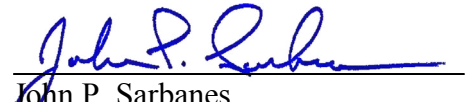
André Carson  
Member of Congress



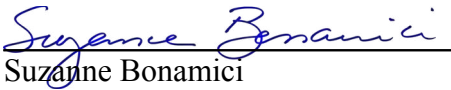
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress



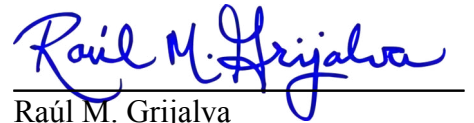
Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



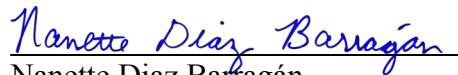
Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

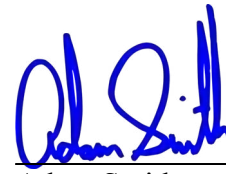


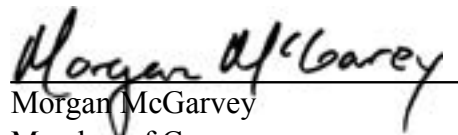
Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress



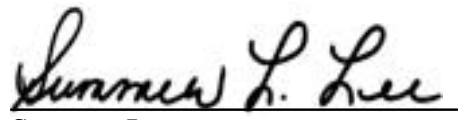
Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress

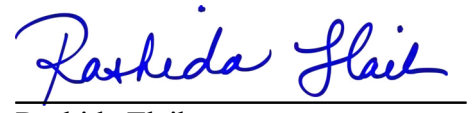
  
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

  
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

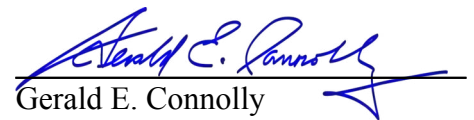
  
Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress

  
Katie Porter  
Member of Congress

  
Summer Lee  
Member of Congress


  
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

  
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

  
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

  
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

  
Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



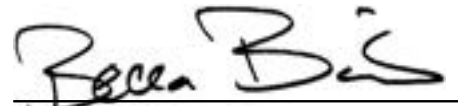
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



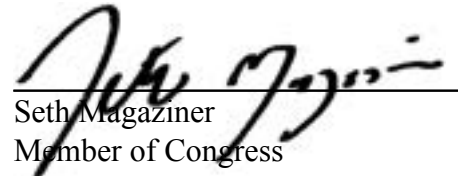
Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



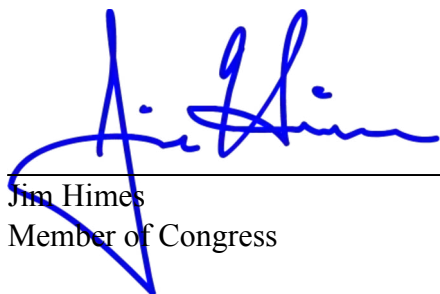
Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress



Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



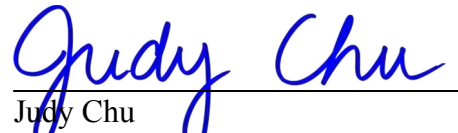
Bill Foster  
Member of Congress





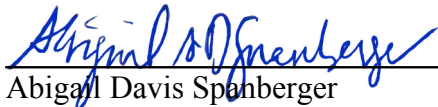
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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



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Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



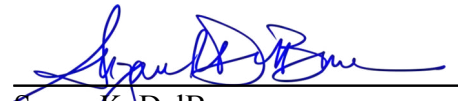
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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



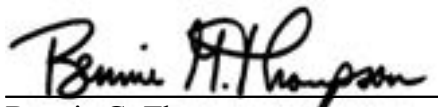
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Mary Sattler Peltola  
Member of Congress



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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress



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Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



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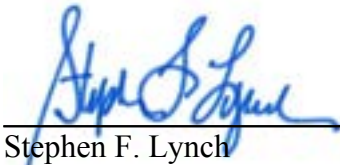
Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



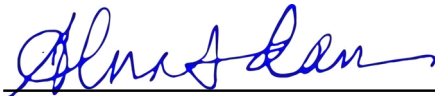
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



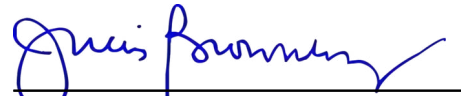
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel  
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



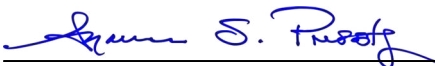
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



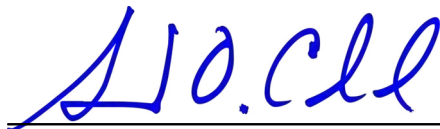
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress




Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



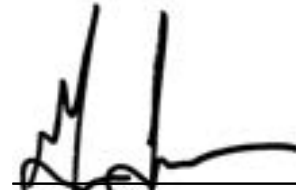
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



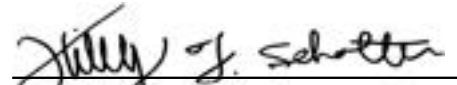
Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



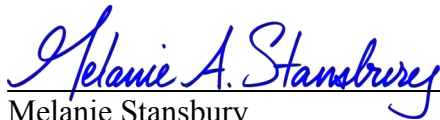
Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress




Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



Cori Bush  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress