



James Firman, Chair

December 13, 2017

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Chairman
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
United State Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chairman
The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) is a coalition of 70 national non-profit organizations concerned with the well-being of older Americans and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena.

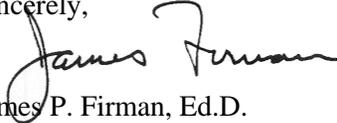
We are writing to strongly encourage you to restore the nearly \$500 million removed from the Social Security Administration (SSA) Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) in the FY 2018 Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations (Labor-HHS) bill, and at a minimum, provide the \$12.457 billion in level-funding proposed in the House Labor-HHS bill and requested in the President's FY18 budget. At a time when 10,000 of baby boomers turn 65 everyday, Congress must ensure the Social Security Administration is able to provide beneficiaries with high quality, timely in-person and telephone services.

The Social Security Administration is thought of as the “face of the federal government”—with over 1,200 field offices, SSA provides services to millions of Americans annually. Over the past decade, Congress has been dramatically decreasing SSA's budget, putting a strain on resources causing layoffs and field office closings. The FY 2018 level for SSA LAE must be, at a minimum, spared from additional reductions, and eventually expanded to support the increased demand for services. As LCAO articulated in its [FY18 appropriations priorities letter](#) in June, \$13.5 billion is needed to allow SSA to operate fully again.

SSA services are guaranteed as part of the insurance premiums beneficiaries pay in the form of payroll contributions. By law, Social Security can only pay benefits and the related administrative costs if it has sufficient income to cover those costs. It has no borrowing authority. It does not add a penny to the nation's debt. Older Americans cannot afford any more cuts in funding to any discretionary programs or the Social Security Administration. We believe that Congress can and must fund important programs that ensure that older Americans are able to age with dignity, health, and independence for as long as possible, while also fully-funding the Social Security Administration to provide seniors with high-quality administrative services they have earned.

As you move forward with the appropriations process, we hope you will recognize the importance of providing services for seniors, one of the most vulnerable groups in our country. The Social Security Administration provides important services that Americans have earned, and the agency cannot afford a \$500 million cut in resources. We look forward to working with you to restore funding to the Social Security in FY 2018 and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Firman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "J".

James P. Firman, Ed.D.
President & CEO, National Council on Aging
Chair, Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

cc: Member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Members of the House Committee on Appropriations