



Debra B. Whitman, Chair

February 27, 2020

The Honorable John Larson
The Committee on Ways and Means
Social Security Subcommittee Chairman
1501 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Vern Buchanan
Committee on Ways and Means
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Senator Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Bill Cassidy
The Committee on Ways and Means
Committee on Finance
Subcommittee on Social Security, Pension and Family Policy
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Larson, Representative Buchanan, Ranking Member Wyden and Senator Cassidy:

Leadership Council of Aging Organizations is a coalition of national nonprofit organizations concerned with the well-being of America's older population and committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. Our coalition serves as a source of information about issues affecting older adults and provides leadership and vision as America works to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by our aging society. Our organizations have expertise in health care, economic security, nutrition and food security, housing, and other vital issues facing older adults and people with disabilities and are universally committed to advancing public health and promoting access to services and supports.

LCAO strongly supports the Know Your Social Security Act (H.R.5306, S. 298) and encourages Congress to pass this important bipartisan legislation quickly. The Know Your Social Security Act clarifies the 1989 law Congress passed requiring the Social Security Administration (SSA) to **mail** annual earnings statements to those contributing toward their benefits with every paycheck. Social Security earnings statements help

working Americans, especially older adults, plan for their future income security. The statements also educate and inform working families of the kinds of benefits they are earning, including survivors and disability benefits. Moreover, they provide evidence of the stake each person has in the system. Perhaps most importantly, benefit statements allow workers to identify and ensure their yearly earnings have been accurately posted. Social Security benefits are based on average earnings over a worker's lifetime. If earnings records are wrong, workers do not receive all the benefits they have worked so hard for.

As technology has progressed, SSA has added the "my Social Security account" feature to its website, allowing individuals to use electronic means to get access to individualized information and a variety of services, including benefit estimates. Providing for electronic access to Social Security information and services has increased SSA's reach substantially but has not lessened the need for mailing paper statements. SSA's inspector general found the percentage of registered "my Social Security account" users who accessed their statements online declined from 96 percent in FY 2012 to 43 percent in FY 2018.¹ Furthermore, earnings statements provided through the mail are important to those who have little or no access to the internet. A 2018 Pew Research Study found that 58% of rural adults say that access to high-speed internet is a problem in their community, while smaller shares of urban (43%) and suburban (36%) residents identify high speed internet access as a problem.² Finally, individuals want and often prefer to receive financial information through the mail. A 2016 FINRA study showed that 49% of respondents preferred physical mail, while only 31 percent of respondents preferred receiving disclosures by email and 14% preferred in-person meetings.³

The Know Your Social Security Act will help strengthen the economic security of older adults. We look forward to seeing this bipartisan legislation get passed and signed into law.

1. Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General. "Issuance of Social Security Statements," (Report No. A-03-18-50724), February 2019. Retrieved from <https://oig.ssa.gov/sites/default/files/audit/full/pdf/A-03-18-50724.pdf>.

2. Pew Research Center, "What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities," 2018, p. 46, file:///C:/Users/Office/AppData/Local/Packages/Microsoft.MicrosoftEdge_8wekyb3d8bbwe/TempState/Downloads/Pew-Research-Center-Community-Type-Full-Report-FINAL.pdf

3. FINRA, Investors in the United States 2016 at 14 (Dec. 2016), https://www.usfinancialcapability.org/downloads/NFCS_2015_Inv_Survey_Full_Report.pdf.

Sincerely,

The undersigned organizations of the by the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations

AARP
AFL-CIO
AFSCME
Aging Life Care Association
Alliance for Retired Americans
American Postal Workers Union Retirees Department
American Society on Aging
Association for Gerontological and Human Development in Historically Black Colleges and Universities
Association of Jewish Aging Services
B'nai B'rith International
Caring Across Generations
Gerontological Society of America
International Association for Indigenous Aging
Jewish Federations of North America
Justice in Aging
LeadingAge
Medicare Rights Center
National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys
National Active and Retired Federal Employees Associations
National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)
National Adult Protective Services Association
National Association for Hispanic Elderly
National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
National Association of State and Long-Term Care Ombudsman
National Caucus and Center on Black Aging, Inc.
National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
National Council on Aging
National Hispanic Council on Aging
Social Security Works
Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement

CC: Members of Committees of Jurisdiction