



Leadership Council
of Aging Organizations

Max Richtman, Chair

March 3, 2021

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

Since 1980, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO) has been the country's preeminent coalition representing older Americans. Composed of 69 national nonprofit organizations, LCAO focuses on the well-being of America's older population and is committed to representing their interests in the policy-making arena. LCAO serves as a source of information about issues affecting older persons and provides leadership and vision as America meets the challenges and opportunities presented by its aging society.

LCAO is deeply concerned about efforts to include provisions of S.4323, the Time to Rescue the United States Trusts Act of 2020 (TRUST Act), from the last Congress in the COVID relief reconciliation package. The TRUST Act would create "rescue committees" to draft fast-track legislation to address the solvency of federal trust funds, including the Social Security and Medicare funds. The TRUST Act does not provide solutions for reaching solvency-or protecting benefits-rather, it would expose these vital programs to whatever across-the-board cuts the "rescue committees" may propose without amendment. This is nothing more than a backdoor means to make benefit cuts that would not be possible through the normal legislative process.

As you well know, the reconciliation process is a powerful tool for enacting legislation with a simple majority of votes in the Senate. To protect Social Security from cuts through this expedited process, both the Congressional Budget Act and the Byrd Rule specifically prohibit including any changes to Social Security's retirement, survivors, or disability programs in reconciliation legislation. Violation of these rules could not only jeopardize our country's older adults and people with disabilities (who have contributed to Social Security and our communities for years) through cuts to Social Security but would also subject the reconciliation bill to points of order under Congressional Budget Act section 310(g), which, if upheld, would bring down the entire legislation.

The proper process for making changes to Social Security and/or Medicare is to allow the committees of jurisdiction to gather information from the public and expert stakeholders, hold hearings on relevant issues, and then develop legislation that takes into consideration the financial status, benefit adequacy, program structure, and needs of the people served by the programs. We strongly urge you to oppose any effort to enact the TRUST Act or similar fast-track Social Security legislation as part of the COVID relief reconciliation bill.

Sincerely,

AARP

AFL-CIO

Aging Life Care Association

Alliance for Retired Americans

American Geriatrics Society

APWU Retirees Department

American Society on Aging

Association for Gerontology and Human Development in HBCUs

B'nai B'rith International

Center for Medicare Advocacy

The Gerontological Society of America

The Jewish Federations of North America

Justice in Aging

LeadingAge

Medicare Rights Center

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association

National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)

National Alliance for Caregiving

National Association for Home Care and Hospice

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs (NANASP)

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

National Association of State Long Term Care Ombudsman Programs

National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care

Pension Rights Center

Social Security Works

Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER)