

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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

May 23, 2025

Dear Chair Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We urge you to support the highest amount possible for the Social Security Administration (SSA) administrative budget, to ensure that the agency has the staffing levels and resources needed to reduce the unacceptable, excessive delays now faced 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 3 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 approximately 70 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 generated a customer service crisis. Since 2010, the number of Social Security beneficiaries has increased by approximately 26 percent as the baby boom generation ages. Yet over the same period, SSA's administrative funding for basic operations fell by approximately 21 percent, after accounting for inflation, and in 2022 SSA's staffing reached a 25-year low. As a result, applicants and beneficiaries faced harmful new delays in many customer service areas.

People seeking access to Social Security benefits and services increasingly face alarming new delays and challenges. In February and March of 2025 only about one in 4 callers to SSA's national 1-800 number have been able to reach an agent.<sup>1</sup> Callers who waited in the queue spent about an hour and 45 minutes on hold, on average – an unconscionable barrier.<sup>2</sup> More than half of seniors and survivors who scheduled an appointment with an SSA field office to file an application for benefits waited more than a month until their appointment.<sup>3</sup> One million people are in a queue awaiting an initial decision on their application for disability benefits, and it will take SSA nearly 8 months, on average, to make a decision – twice as long as in the past.<sup>4</sup> These long waits can be particularly harmful for people of color, low-income applicants, and others

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ssa.gov/news/assets/materials/wor/SSAMonthlyOperationalReport.xlsx>

<sup>2</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/shared/H4D6WWC7W?:display\\_count=n&:origin=viz\\_share\\_link](https://public.tableau.com/shared/H4D6WWC7W?:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link)

<sup>3</sup> [https://public.tableau.com/shared/WX5YFT2G9?:display\\_count=n&:origin=viz\\_share\\_link](https://public.tableau.com/shared/WX5YFT2G9?:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ssa.gov/ssa-performance/disability-processing-time>

who on average are less likely to have savings or other resources to fall back on. Thousands are dying 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, an earned benefit, is one thing the American people should be able to count on. A multi-year effort of sustained funding increases with restoration of adequate agency staffing is urgently needed for SSA to bring customer service back to acceptable levels. SSA has a proven track record of producing results when consistently given the resources needed to staff the work. For example, dedicated funding provided by Congress for several consecutive years 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 for SSA in FY 2026, to ensure the agency has the staffing and resources needed to deliver the benefits and services that Americans are counting on.

Sincerely,



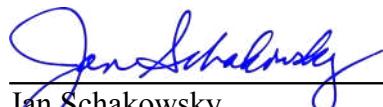
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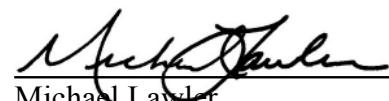


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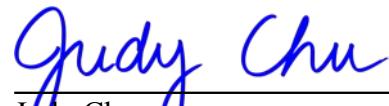
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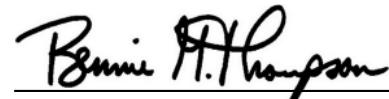
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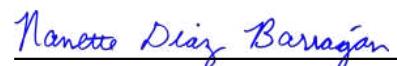
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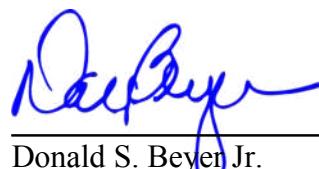
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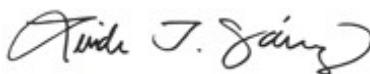
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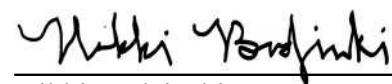
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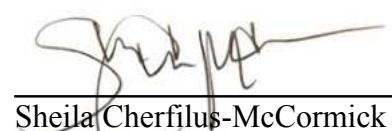
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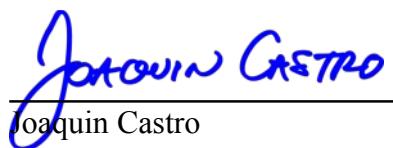
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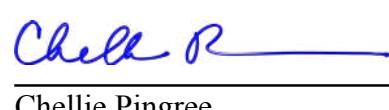
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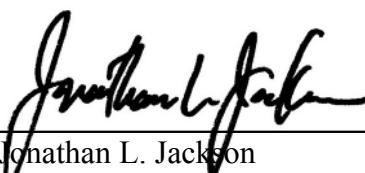
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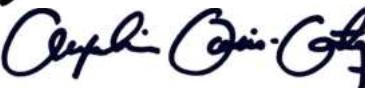
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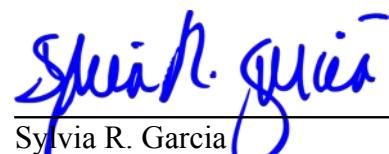
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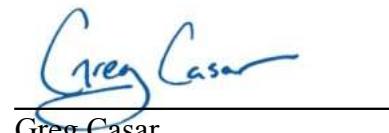
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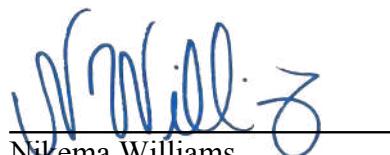
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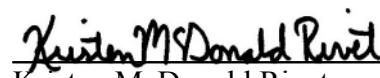
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