

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 9, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell,

This week, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives took an unprecedented step toward cutting Social Security benefits for millions of Americans with disabilities, including veterans and children. As you consider what legislation Congress must pass this year, and how to maintain good governance of the United States Senate, we ask you not to pursue this highly partisan rule change.

We are deeply concerned that the rule change in the House will impact millions of Social Security beneficiaries. According to its actuaries, the Social Security Disability Trust Fund will be unable to pay full disability benefits starting as early as 2016, meaning that legislative action will be necessary to protect the benefits of nearly 11 million Americans. Instead of taking responsible action to address this issue, House Republicans acted according to their extreme ideology and put these benefits at risk by adopting a legislative rule change that creates a point of order against simple bipartisan technical corrections (called reallocations) to adjust the financing of the Social Security Disability Trust Fund.

This move is a particularly audacious in light of the fact that past reallocations have been commonplace and bipartisan. In fact, Congress has reallocated taxes between the Social Security retirement and disability trust funds 11 times before, in both directions, when it was needed to put either program on stronger footing.

The last reallocation occurred in 1994 and was passed without opposition by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. After that reallocation, it was projected that the Disability Trust Fund would be depleted in 2016 – so the need to adjust the trust fund's financing is not a surprise or cause for alarm. There were no accusations of mismanagement then, or the four times it was used under President Reagan, because this country has traditionally managed Social Security as a whole. It is cynical to try and pit retirees and beneficiaries with disabilities against each other, as the House Republican rule change attempts to do.

An earnest debate on how to improve the solvency of the Social Security Trust Funds is needed, and we look forward to working together to find bipartisan solutions. However, House Republicans have eliminated a common sense action to ensure that Americans with disabilities who receive Social Security benefits are held harmless as Congress debates that issue.

Holding hostage the Social Security benefits of any American, particularly those of the 9 million Americans with disabilities who are at risk in the coming years, is an untenable proposition. It only increases the chances of yet another unnecessary manufactured crisis, akin to shutting down the government or threatening the full faith and credit of the United States. We ask that you speak out and forcibly reject the House Republican rule in order to take this reckless concept off the table and ensure Americans with disabilities that they can count on their government to act responsibly.

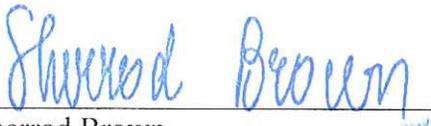
Sincerely,



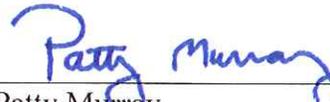
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Dick Durbin
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Chuck Schumer
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



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