

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2024

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leader Jeffries,

As you work to finalize Fiscal Year 24 appropriations legislation and other must pass bills, we urge you to exclude the creation of a so-called fiscal commission, especially with language that creates a “fast-track” process around regular order.

Fiscal Commission legislation currently under consideration by the House Committee on Budget would create a process in which legislating would be done by a small group of individuals behind closed doors. The goal of these commissions would be to produce legislation that cuts benefits and calls for an up or down vote without hearings, and that is unamendable.

This is not a simple debate over process. Without member input and public review, fiscal commissions have historically recommended cutting or privatizing Social Security:

- The *Greenspan Commission*¹ was the basis of the Social Security Amendments of 1983, which resulted in a raise in the retirement age that was the equivalent to a 13% benefit cut, a tax on benefits for middle income retirees, and the creation of the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) which reduces the benefits of nearly 2 million public servants.
- The *President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security*, established by President George W. Bush, issued a report outlining three models of partial privatization of Social Security.²
- Most recently, the *Bowles-Simpson Commission*³ recommended raising the retirement age, reducing the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), and reducing benefit amounts for many earners.⁴

Given this track record, and the stated intention of the Republican Study Committee, a Commission would have fast-track authority to enact greater cuts to Social Security and other programs vital to the American people. This is no profile in courage, it's a direct circumvention of the process to expedite cuts to Social Security.

Let's be clear, a Commission is not the solution. There is no shortage of legislation that will improve the fiscal standing of the United States while directly benefiting the public. Democratic proposals include legislation that would extend Social Security's solvency for another generation

¹ Formally the *National Commission on Social Security Reform*

² https://www.ssa.gov/history/reports/pcss/Final_report.pdf

³ Formally the *National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform*

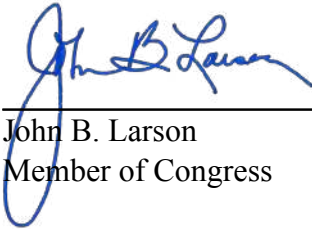
⁴ https://www.cbpp.org/research/bowles-simpson-social-security-proposal-not-a-good-starting-point-for-reforms#_ftnref2

while *expanding* benefits the American people rely on – benefits that haven't been expanded in more than 50 years. It is Congress's responsibility to conduct the oversight and recommend enhancements to solvency or cuts, and it should be done in the open and not behind closed doors.

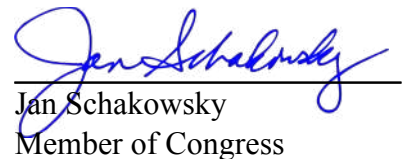
We do not need a Commission to tell us what we must do, we need the political courage to take up these or any other proposals in regular order. Committees and subcommittees must have the ability to hold hearings to examine policy and mark-ups so that improvements can be made on behalf of our constituents.

We urge you to commit to regular order by opposing the creation of a fiscal commission in any must pass legislation.

Sincerely,



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



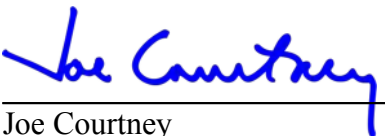
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



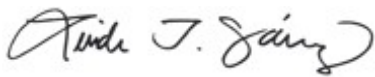
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



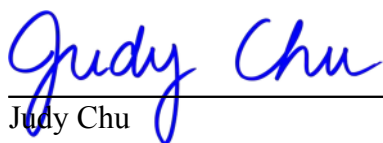
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Joseph D. Morelle
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



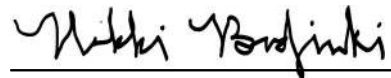
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



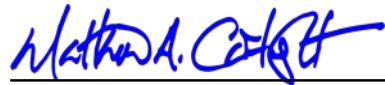
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress




Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



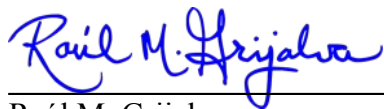
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress




Summer Lee
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



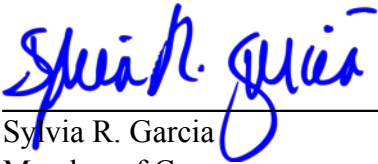
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



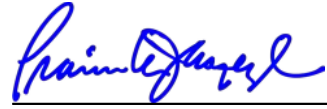
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



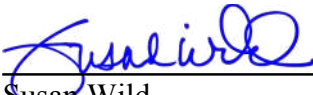
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



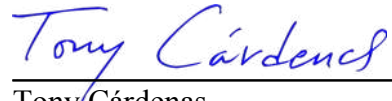
Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



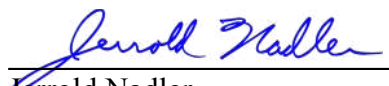
André Carson
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress




Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress




Terrold Nadler
Member of Congress




Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress




Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



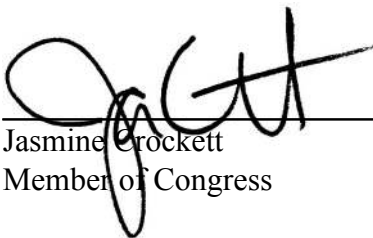
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress




Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



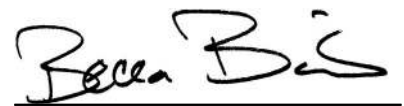
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress




Cori Bush
Member of Congress



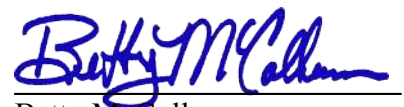
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



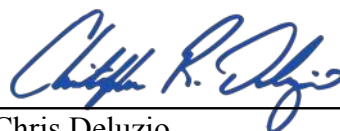
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



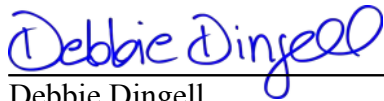
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



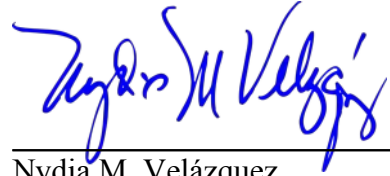
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



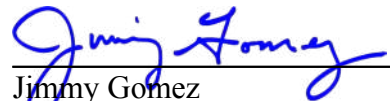
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



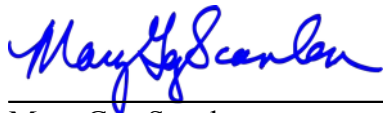
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



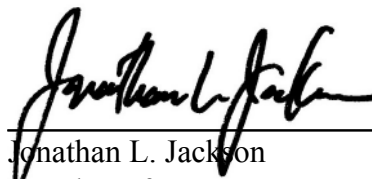
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Mary Sattler Peltola
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress



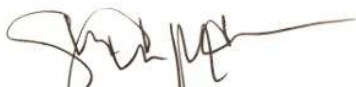
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



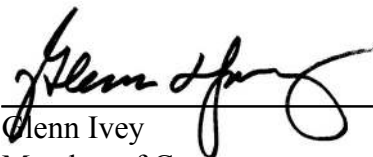
John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Robert J. Menendez
Member of Congress



Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



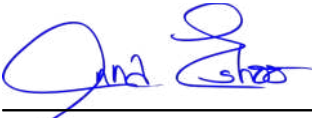
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



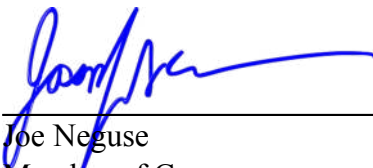
Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



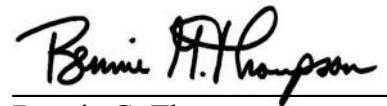
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress