Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 15, 2010

Dear President Obama:

We write today to express our strong support for Social Security and our view that it should be strengthened. We oppose any cuts to Social Security benefits, including raising the retirement age. We also oppose any effort to privatize Social Security, in whole or in part.

You have charged the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform with proposing recommendations that improve the long-term fiscal outlook and address the growth of entitlement spending. It is our view that Social Security—which is prohibited by law from adding to the national budget deficit—does not belong as part of those recommendations.

By 2023, Social Security will have built up a $4.3 trillion surplus, and, without any action, can pay full benefits until 2037 and at least 75 percent of all benefits thereafter. Because Social Security is funded separately from the general treasury and has no borrowing authority, it has not contributed to the federal deficit. Despite these facts, some Commission members have repeatedly alleged the need to cut Social Security for budgetary reasons.

For 75 years, Social Security has been a promise to the American people that if they work hard and pay their fair share, they will have a financially secure retirement. In communities across this country, Social Security benefits are often the only source of income helping families maintain a decent standard of living. Social Security's benefits are modest, averaging less than $13,000 a year, but they are vital to the vast majority of Americans who receive them.

Cutting Social Security benefits beyond the already scheduled increase in the retirement age from 65 to 67 would create even more needless hardship for millions of vulnerable Americans. This is especially true in the face of an economic downturn that has wiped out trillions of dollars that Americans were relying on for their retirement security and the increased dismantlement of the private and public pension systems.

If any of the Commission's recommendations cut or diminish Social Security in any way, we will stand firmly against them. We urge you to join us in protecting and strengthening Social Security rather than letting it fall victim to a misguided attempt to reduce budget deficits on the backs of working families.

Sincerely,

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