

December 6, 2012

Dear Speaker Boehner:

We are writing to inform you that we will oppose including Social Security cuts for future or current beneficiaries in any deficit reduction package.

Under long-standing federal law, Social Security is not part of the federal budget and cannot contribute to the federal deficit. This reflects Social Security's structure as an independent, self-financed insurance program, in which worker contributions, not general taxes, finance benefits. In our view, it is essential that Social Security's status as a separate entity be fully maintained.

Contrary to some claims, Social Security is not the cause of our nation's deficit problem. Not only does the program operate independently, but it is prohibited from borrowing. Social Security must pay all benefits from its own trust fund. If there are insufficient funds to pay out full benefits, benefits are automatically reduced to the level supported by the program's own revenues. Social Security cannot drive up the deficit by tapping general revenues to pay benefits. Additionally, it is important to note that over its lifetime, Social Security has collected and earned \$15.5 trillion and only paid out \$12.9 trillion in benefits.

Even though Social Security operates in a fiscally responsible manner, some still advocate deep benefit cuts and seem convinced that Social Security hands out lavish welfare checks. But Social Security is not welfare. Seniors earned their benefits by working hard and paying into the system. Meanwhile, the average monthly Social Security benefit for seniors is only about \$1,200, quite low by international standards.

For all these reasons, we believe it would be a serious mistake to cut Social Security benefits for current or future beneficiaries as part of a deficit reduction package. To be sure, Social Security has its own long-term challenges that will need to be addressed in the decades ahead. But the budget and Social Security are separate and should be considered separately.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

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Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress

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Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress

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John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

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Gary L. Ackerman  
Member of Congress

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André Carson  
Member of Congress

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Joe Baca  
Member of Congress

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Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress

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Shelley Berkley  
Member of Congress

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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress

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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

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Hansen Clarke  
Member of Congress

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Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

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Corrine Brown  
Member of Congress

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William Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

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G.K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress

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Emanuel Cleaver  
Member of Congress

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Lois Capps  
Member of Congress

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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

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Jerry R. Costello  
Member of Congress

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Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

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Mark S. Critz  
Member of Congress

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Eni F. H. Faleomavaega  
Member of Congress

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Elijah E. Cummings  
Member of Congress

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Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress

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David Alan Curson  
Member of Congress

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Barney Frank  
Member of Congress

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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

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Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress

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Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

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John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

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Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress

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Gene Green  
Member of Congress

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Theodore E. Deutch  
Member of Congress

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Luis V. Gutierrez  
Member of Congress

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Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress

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Colleen W. Hanabusa  
Member of Congress

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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

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James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

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Maurice D. Hinchey  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Rubén Hinojosa  
Member of Congress

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Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

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Rush Holt  
Member of Congress

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John Lewis  
Member of Congress

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Michael M. Honda  
Member of Congress

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David Loebsack  
Member of Congress

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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson  
Member of Congress

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Nita M. Lowey  
Member of Congress

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Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

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Dennis J. Kucinich  
Member of Congress

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Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

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Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress

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James P. Moran  
Member of Congress

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Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress

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Christopher S. Murphy  
Member of Congress

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Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress

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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress

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Jim McDermott  
Member of Congress

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John W. Olver  
Member of Congress

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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

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William L. Owens  
Member of Congress

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Michael H. Michaud  
Member of Congress

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Ed Pastor  
Member of Congress

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George Miller  
Member of Congress

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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

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Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

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Nick J. Rahall, II  
Member of Congress

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Charles B. Rangel  
Member of Congress

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Janice D. Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

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Laura Richardson  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress

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Robert C. Scott  
Member of Congress

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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

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Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Fortney Pete Stark  
Member of Congress

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Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress

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Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

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John F. Tierney  
Member of Congress

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Edolphus Towns  
Member of Congress

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Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress

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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

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Lynn C. Woolsey  
Member of Congress

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John A. Yarmuth  
Member of Congress

