

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

April 10, 2019

Dear Colleague:

Last year the Social Security Trustees Report for 2018 showed that while the combined Social Security trust fund has a substantial surplus, program costs were expected to exceed total income for the first time since 1982. Now is the time to strengthen Social Security for future generations and improve benefits for Americans who rely on the program. **For that reason I invite you to cosponsor the Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act for the 116th Congress.**

Most Americans contribute 6.2 percent of their paychecks to Social Security, but higher income earners pay less as their contributions phase out on income over \$132,900. By making sure those at the top of the income ladder pay the same rates as most Americans, PPSSA extends the program's solvency at a time when most retirees rely on Social Security for a majority of their income. The bill also restores accuracy to the current cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) formula to ensure that benefits continue to keep pace rather than shrink with inflation.

**Removing the Income Cap on Taxable Income:** For most Americans, Social Security contributions are deducted from each paycheck. Current law sets a cap on those contributions based on income, and higher income earners stop paying into the program once they hit the cap each year. PPSSA gradually and responsibly phases out this provision over seven years until higher income Americans pay into Social Security at the same rates as everyone else.

**Improving Benefits for Seniors and Other Beneficiaries:** Today, Social Security benefit payments are adjusted through the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). However, costs for seniors and other individuals with fixed incomes tend to rise faster than those for working Americans. PPSSA improves benefits for beneficiaries by applying a more accurate COLA through the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E).

**Strengthening the Social Security Trust Fund:** According to the Trustees Reports, without changes Social Security will be able to cover full administrative costs and benefits until 2034. But while the program currently has a substantial surplus, last year program costs were expected to exceed total income for the first time since 1982. Based on Social Security Administration estimates, enacting PPSSA would provide 19 additional years of solvency—until 2053.

Similar legislation has been introduced in the House by Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL-22). For more information or to cosponsor please contact [Ben\\_Strand@hirono.senate.gov](mailto:Ben_Strand@hirono.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



MAZIE K. HIRONO  
United States Senator

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE:  
713 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510  
(202) 224-6361



HAWAII OFFICE:  
PRINCE JONAH KUHIU KALANIANA'OLE FEDERAL BUILDING  
300 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, RM 3-106  
HONOLULU, HI 96850  
(808) 522-8970  
TOLL FREE: (844) 478-3478

