

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

January 28, 2016

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

We write to you to encourage the Senate Finance Committee to continue to work on real proposals to address clearly-identified problems within the Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program.

As you know, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 (the Act) signed into law by President Obama included several provisions related to the SSDI Program. In addition to a reallocation of payroll tax from the Old Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) trust fund to shore up the SSDI trust fund until 2022, the law includes a number of modest proposals aimed at program integrity and encouraging work. We appreciate that the legislation averted the immediate crisis of a benefit cut for SSDI beneficiaries in 2016. However, the provisions included in the Bipartisan Budget Act are only a small step towards the long-term solvency issues facing the SSDI program.

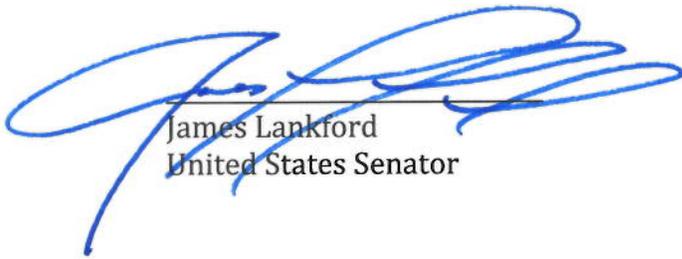
The 2015 Social Security Trustees report recommended "Any necessary resource reallocation that does occur should not be regarded as a substitute for action to sustain the finances of DI and Social Security as a whole, nor enacted in a manner that has the effect of further postponing those required corrections." Although the Act temporarily extended the solvency of the SSDI program and included some small improvements to the program, it did little to improve the program's long-term finances or to improve the structure of the SSDI program for beneficiaries and taxpayers. We hope you agree that more substantial reforms are needed.

Over the course of last year Members of Congress, good-government groups, stakeholders, and disability advocates proposed and commented on numerous proposals aimed at reforming SSDI. A good faith effort needs to be undertaken to examine all of these proposals to address the problems facing the program in total: reform is needed for the SSDI application and adjudication process to ensure fair and more timely hearings; correction is needed where SSDI overlaps with other federal programs; continued fraud and overpayments to individuals who are no longer disabled must be addressed; and, ideas to intervene with applicants early and encourage a return to work must be examined to

ensure applicants receive the support they need to either achieve benefits or re-enter the workforce. We must work to strengthen this program so that it continues to be financially strong for the individuals who are truly in need.

We look forward to working with you to achieve true disability insurance reform to protect disabled beneficiaries and the trust funds.

Sincerely,



James Lankford
United States Senator



Joe Manchin
United States Senator