



President  
**Barbara J. Easterling**

Secretary-Treasurer  
**Ruben Burks**

March 13, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chairman  
Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin:

On behalf of our four million members, the Alliance for Retired Americans writes to thank you for introducing the Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013. This legislation will strengthen Social Security while improving the economic and retirement security of millions of Americans.

As you know, we are facing a retirement security deficit of \$6.6 trillion. The number of employer-provided pensions, with protection from the types of market fluctuations that decimated the values of so many 401(k) plans, has declined dramatically. Personal savings accounts have been wiped out by increasing health care costs and falling housing values.

Throughout these turbulent times, Social Security has been the one saving grace, delivering its guaranteed benefits on time and without interruption. Though Social Security's hard-earned benefits are modest – they are vitally important to all who rely on them, including seniors, people with disabilities and families of deceased workers. In fact, over 54 million Americans – 1 out of every 4 households – rely on Social Security's lifetime, guaranteed benefits.

The Strengthening Social Security Act recognizes the true importance of this great American program and proposes measures that would both enhance benefits for current beneficiaries *and* strengthen the long term solvency of Social Security for all Americans. Specifically, by phasing out the earnings cap on contributions to Social Security, your legislation extends the life of the Social Security Trust Fund through 2049. The gains made from the elimination of the earnings cap will actually be used to increase average benefits by about \$65 per month or \$800 per year. Additionally, by adjusting the COLA formula to the CPI-E, your bill immediately helps Social Security beneficiaries meet their daily needs.

Along with our 4 million members, we applaud your continued effort to strengthen and support Social Security for current and future generations. We thank you for introducing the Strengthening Social Security Act of 2013 and look forward to working with you to ensure its passage. Should you have any questions, please contact Richard Fiesta or Sarah Byrne at the Alliance Department of Government and Political Affairs.

Sincerely yours,

Handwritten signature of Barbara J. Easterling in black ink.

Barbara J. Easterling  
President

Handwritten signature of Ruben Burks in black ink.

Ruben Burks  
Secretary-Treasurer

Handwritten signature of Edward F. Coyle in black ink.

Edward F. Coyle  
Executive Director

