



For Immediate Release:

May 15, 2020

LARSON, CASTRO DEMAND TRUMP ADMIN STOP PLAN TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY

WASHINGTON, D.C. — **Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Chairman John B. Larson (CT-01) and Foreign Affairs Oversight Subcommittee Chairman Joaquin Castro (TX-20)** are requesting that the U.S. State Department immediately turn over the Trump administration's plan to cut Social Security benefits and all related documents.

In the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic and with over 20 million Americans unemployed in the last month alone, reports of a secret document developed by State Department officials to undermine retirement security are disturbing and the Trump administration must be held accountable.

"The idea that we would ask Americans to sell out their retirement and long-term security for assistance during a crisis is insane. Social Security is our nation's most successful program that provides security to all working Americans," said **Congressman Larson**. "Yet, the Republicans are constantly looking for ways to cut this earned benefit. This attempt is ludicrous. Social Security is here for Americans for times exactly like the ones we face today. We need to strengthen it. That's why I introduced the [Emergency Social Security Benefits Improvement Act](#) which expands benefits and helps those most in need."

"America leadership is absent during this global pandemic, and now the American people have learned that the U.S. State Department developed a secret plan to cut hard-earned Social Security benefits," said **Congressman Castro**. "This should not be a surprise after earlier this year in Davos when President Trump said, 'At the right time, we will take a look at that.' Jeopardizing retirement security during a health and economic crisis that disproportionately impacts older Americans is not the 'right time' — we should only be strengthening Social Security."

Full text of the letter follows and can be found [here](#).

Dear Under Secretary Krach:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, millions of families in the United States are struggling to make ends meet due to the economic effects of this public health crisis. Congress has acted to provide a substantial and widespread economic stimulus, but we believe much more needs to be done to ensure families around our country are able to get by during this emergency.

While the Federal Government must be responsive to their needs, we write to you with deep concerns regarding the "Eagle Plan" which reports indicate^[1] was drafted within your offices by a member of your team, Mr. Paul Touw, that calls for cuts to earned Social Security benefits. This plan is deeply concerning in both its policy and its development.

In this moment of crisis, when millions of Americans are struggling to make ends meet and fear for their retirement, we should be enhancing Social Security, not developing policies to reduce benefits. The idea that you would ask individual Americans to sell out their hard-earned retirement security as the price of desperately-needed help during a crisis is unacceptable. Social Security benefits are the bedrock of retirement security – the one source of retirement income that is guaranteed to be secure and reliable. We will never force people to choose between putting food on the table now, and ensuring that they will receive the full, earned Social Security benefits they'll need when they retire or if they become severely disabled or die prematurely. Now is the time to strengthen, not cut, this essential program.

Moreover, if these reports are accurate, this input into domestic policy is entirely outside the mandate of the State Department, and is a wholly inappropriate use of its resources. In light of these concerns, we ask that the Department produce to the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations and the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, no later than May 21st, 2020, the following items:

1. The complete and unredacted "Eagle Plan" document, in addition to the unredacted clearance page for the document.
2. A list of all individuals, in and out of the Department of State, who contributed to the development of the document or the Social Security policies within it.
3. Any and all documents referring, relating to, or referencing the "Eagle Plan" or Social Security policy produced by the State Department.

Our staffs are prepared to work cooperatively with you to ensure these documents are produced. Please reach out to our staff to provide the requested documents or if you have any additional questions.

###

Connect with Congressman Larson Online:



All discussions on this listserv are off the record unless otherwise stated by the author.

^[1] Washington Post, **Top White House advisers, unlike their boss, increasingly worry stimulus spending is costing too much**, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/10/top-white-house-advisers-unlike-their-boss-increasingly-worry-stimulus-spending-is-costing-too-much/>