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July 28, 2014

The Honorable Sam Johnson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Social Security
B-317 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman: Sam,

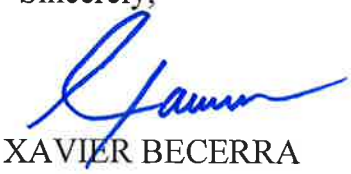
I appreciate the opportunity we had last week to discuss the witnesses invited to testify at Tuesday's hearing. Your decision not to invite the author of the 2014 Social Security Trustees Report, Mr. Stephen Goss, Social Security's Chief Actuary, to testify is troubling. One of the stated purposes of this hearing, scheduled to take place the day after the 2014 Social Security report is released, is to "focus on the financial status of the Social Security programs". The only witness you invited with some level of involvement in the report will be a political appointee, Charles Blahous.

Mr. Blahous, the Republican appointee to the board that oversees the report, is a long-time advocate of privatizing Social Security and cutting its guaranteed benefits, including cutting COLAs for current seniors using the chained CPI. While Republicans and Democrats have different policy views on Social Security, Americans regardless of political affiliation rely on it. They earn their Social Security benefits by working and paying into the Trust Fund -- thereby ensuring foundational economic security for themselves and their families in the event of retirement, career-ending disability, or premature death.

The continued success and strength of Social Security can be undermined by a lack of bipartisan support and action in Congress. That's why our subcommittee's role overseeing and fact-finding on Social Security is so important and indispensable. To do our work properly, we need to hear from the nation's foremost expert on the 2014 Social Security report, the Chief Actuary for Social Security.

I strongly urge you to reconsider your decision to exclude Chief Actuary Stephen Goss from our hearing. He is available to testify. Chief Actuary Goss would provide a neutral, non-partisan recitation of the facts before we are presented with partisan policy recommendations.

Sincerely,



XAVIER BECERRA
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Social Security