

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

July 28, 2020

Dear Chairman Davis and Chairman Larson,

Justice in Aging is pleased to endorse the Fairness for Seniors and People with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act. Justice in Aging is an advocacy organization with the mission of improving the lives of low-income older adults. We use the power of law to fight senior poverty by increasing economic security and securing access to affordable health care and the courts for older adults with limited resources. We applaud this bill, which would protect populations especially at risk during this pandemic, including older adults, people of color, and people with disabilities.

This bill would prevent people receiving Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) from being forced to repay extra benefits they may have received because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Most of these beneficiaries have little to no ability to pay these benefits back, and collecting on these overpayments would cause them significant harm, and disproportionately harm people of color, who have already been particularly devastated by the current crisis.

While the Social Security Administration (SSA) may waive repayment of an overpayment when the person is without fault and unable to pay it back, this happens only on an individual basis and most people, who do not have the assistance of a representative, will not be able to navigate the process. Instead, we must ensure that SSA does not force individuals to repay any extra benefits received during the Covid-19 crisis.

Sincerely,

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