



# U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS  
1139 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
Washington, DC 20515

December 31, 2024

Carolyn W. Colvin  
Acting Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Blvd  
Woodlawn, MD 21207

Dear Acting Commissioner Colvin,

Out of concern for the ongoing need to have a Social Security Chief Actuary whose impartiality is unimpeachable, I write to strongly urge you to postpone making any appointment of a Chief Actuary upon the announced January 3, 2025, retirement of the incumbent Chief Actuary on anything other than an acting basis.

The Chief Actuary plays a vital role in assessing the operations of Social Security's Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance programs, as well as helping Congress and the American people understand the implications of proposed changes. It is imperative that this position be performed in an impartial, nonpartisan manner to avoid the injection of political preferences into what policy makers rely upon as objective analyses.

I am strongly concerned that unnecessarily pushing through a permanent appointment to this position would not only associate this decision with other, overtly political midnight decisions that have been made by the Biden Administration on its way out of the door<sup>1</sup>, but would also unfairly prejudice any appointment made under such circumstances, even if the prospective appointee is otherwise highly qualified and has an unblemished record of impartiality.

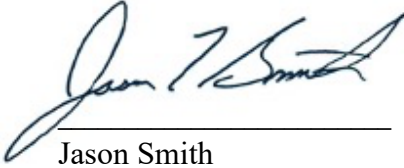
Even the appearance of politics can erode the public's trust in the Social Security Administration and its programs, and attempts to use the Office of the Chief Actuary for partisan purposes highlight the dangers of perceived bias. Acting during a transitional period amplifies these concerns. Ideally, this decision should be made by the next Senate-confirmed Commissioner, who is uniquely positioned to make this decision in an accountable manner due to the rigorous vetting and confirmation process, which engenders increased public confidence. Deferring this decision would signal a commitment to impartiality and transparency, which the American people expect and deserve.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://waysandmeans.house.gov/2024/12/04/smith-seniors-will-struggle-to-access-services-as-biden-admin-doubles-down-on-failed-telework-giveaway-to-government-employees/>

The Social Security programs have long enjoyed broad bipartisan support, serving as a lifeline for retirees, individuals with disabilities, and their families. Any action perceived as partisan or rushed must be avoided. I urge you to refrain from appointing a permanent Chief Actuary and to leave this decision to the next Senate-confirmed Commissioner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason Smith", written over a horizontal line.

Jason Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means