



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

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**Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force
Statement on the 2017 Social Security Trustees Report
July 13, 2017**

Washington, DC – Today, the Social Security Trustees released their annual report on the current and projected financial status of the Social Security trust funds. The 2017 Trustees Report highlights that our Social Security system continues to operate well for the American people. Our Social Security system's financial outlook remains stable, and can continue to pay all scheduled old age, survivors, and disability benefits until 2034. With modest increases in revenue, Social Security will be able to pay full benefits throughout the century and beyond.

The 2017 Trustees Report finds that Social Security is fully solvent until 2034, but faces a moderate long-term shortfall. In 2016, Social Security took in roughly \$35 billion more in total income, including interest, than it paid out. Its reserves were \$2.85 trillion at the end of 2016. If Congress does not act before 2034, the reserves would be drawn down, and revenue coming into the Trust Funds would cover about 77 percent of scheduled benefits. The Trustees Report also projects that Social Security's Disability Insurance (DI) trust fund by itself can pay all scheduled benefits until 2028 – 5 years longer than projected in the 2016 Trustees Report. If Congress takes no action before 2028, the Trustees project that thereafter the DI trust fund will be able to pay about 93 percent of scheduled benefits.

The modest but vital insurance payments that Social Security provides make it possible for millions of seniors and people with disabilities to live independently, keep a roof over their heads and food on the table, and pay for needed, often life-sustaining medications and other basic expenses. The alternatives, if benefits were cut or eliminated, are often unthinkable.

Too often, people talk about making changes to our Social Security system without considering the impact such changes would have on real people. The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force supports ensuring the long-term solvency of the overall Social Security system, while preserving and strengthening the vital role that Social Security plays in supporting seniors and people with disabilities. CCD opposes benefit cuts and supports thoughtful approaches to ensuring Social Security's long-term solvency, while preserving the vital role that Social Security plays in the lives of people with disabilities and their families. The CCD Social Security Task Force also urges Congress to create a single Social Security Trust Fund or rebalance revenues to put the existing funds on an even financial path, to facilitate Congress to evaluate and ensure the long-term solvency of Social Security as a comprehensive system, and eliminate artificial crisis points.

Additionally, Congress should provide adequate funding to ensure strong customer service at the Social Security Administration. This includes addressing the historic backlog and wait times that Americans applying for Social Security disability benefits currently face. Today, nearly 1.1 million people are waiting an average of over 625 days for a hearing on their application for Social Security or Supplemental Security Income disability benefits. These shocking and historic delays leave many destitute, with little to no income or access to essential health care under Medicare. Many lose their homes, and in 2016 more than 8,000 people died while awaiting a hearing. These delays are the direct result of chronic underfunding of Social Security's administrative budget, which is less than a penny of every dollar collected and spent on benefits.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The CCD Social Security Task Force focuses on disability policy issues in the Social Security Act Title II disability programs and the Title XVI Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

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