



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

February 23, 2016

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chair
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

On behalf of the 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO, I write to express our concern about the possible extension of the four-year terms of Charles P. Blahous III and Robert D. Reichauer as public trustees of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds.

Social Security and Medicare are overseen by six trustees—four administration officials and two representing the public. The position of public trustee was established in 1983 to bring fresh perspectives and provide greater accountability to the annual Social Security and Medicare trustee reports. The public trustees serve limited terms and may not be from the same political party. Their independence brings credibility to the oversight process and bolsters public confidence that the trust funds are managed wisely.

Extending the terms of Social Security and Medicare public trustees has faced bi-partisan Congressional opposition in the past. As Senator Charles Grassley stated in 2006 when President Bush moved to extend the terms of the public trustees, “This is a small board and every member carries a lot of weight. It’s important to have new people every four years to represent the taxpaying public’s perspective on the challenges facing two of the most successful government programs in history.”

Although the sitting trustees have been renominated for a second term, the United States Senate is entrusted to provide oversight and confirmation of nominees for this vitally important public office. There are many capable individuals who would bring academic rigor, fresh ideas, and diverse political perspectives to the job of public trustee. We strongly urge you to work with the administration to bring forward two new qualified candidates for these positions.

Thank you for consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department