



President  
**Barbara J. Easterling**

Secretary-Treasurer  
**Ruben Burks**

January 20, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write you as the national officers and the presidents of the state chapters of the Alliance for Retired Americans, a national organization of four million members dedicated to securing a better quality of life for all Americans in retirement. We believe that you have the opportunity to renew the nation's commitment to the Social Security program during the State of the Union Address next week.

Mr. President, Social Security, which just celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2010, is the nation's premier social insurance program. It has provided economic security for millions of Americans of all ages across the last 75 years. From the nation's youngest, who have lost a parent, to the oldest, who live in retirement, Social Security has been a constant, positive force in our nation's life. Now, Social Security benefits go to nearly one in four American households. Without the guaranteed benefits of the program, nearly half of older and disabled Americans would live in poverty. No other program, funded entirely by worker and employer contributions and without government funds, has had such a long lasting positive impact on American life.

We are concerned, Mr. President, that many in Washington will try to take advantage of the nation's current debt situation and cause permanent damage to the Social Security program. As the Co-Chairs of the Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform recently pointed out, the Social Security program has not contributed at all to the nation's debt. While we disagree with many of the Co-Chairs' Social Security recommendations, such as raising the retirement age and cutting benefits for current and future retirees, the fact remains that the current debt situation should not be a political cover for attacking the Social Security program. We strongly urge you to resist such efforts.

We urge you to speak forcefully in favor of a strengthened Social Security program. We recognize that long term efforts will be necessary to keep the program financially sound as well as being able to provide benefits that are adequate to maintain a dignified quality of life. However, the debate over the current debt situation is not the forum for debating the future of Social Security. We applaud your leadership on vital issues such as health care reform which has benefited our members. We believe you are now in a position to demonstrate that same leadership on behalf of the Social Security program.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Easterling  
President

Ruben Burks  
Secretary-Treasurer

Edward F. Coyle  
Executive Director



### **The Presidents of the 30 State Alliances**

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Arizona Alliance for Retired Americans

Nan Brasmer, President  
California Alliance for Retired Americans

Vivian Stovall, President  
Colorado Alliance for Retired Americans

Cal Bunnell, President  
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