

**NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SSA FIELD OPERATIONS LOCALS
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, AFL-CIO**

Representing over 29,000 Social Security Employees working in over 1,300 field installations and 36 teleservice centers across the nation, Puerto Rico and Pacific Islands

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February 18, 2011

Michael J. Astrue
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore MD 21235

Re: SSA Budget FY11

Commissioner Astrue:

I wish to thank you for agreeing to provide vital information to AFGE regarding the impact of budget cuts on SSA's ability to provide service to the American public. Last week 125 SSA employees spoke to legislators and their staffs about the potential devastating effects of failure to enact the Agency's FY11 budget request. 1000 total AFGE activists were on the hill spreading the message that agency budgets must be preserved and that federal employees should not be targeted with pay freezes, reductions in Civil Service pensions and deleterious changes in the federal employees health benefits plan.

Two weeks ago I made a request for budget information that AFGE could use during the AFGE legislative conference. We fully understood that the SSA appropriations request was embargoed until President Obama released his FY 12 budget request. However, we appreciate the information that we were provided regarding the adverse impact of maintaining the FY 10 continuing resolution budget for the entire FY11. Legislators and their staffs were concerned when we informed them that maintenance of FY 10 appropriations would result in a hiring freeze, the elimination of overtime and significant backlogs and processing delays in all work categories. They were also concerned when AFGE activists informed them that if Congress appropriates less than the FY 10 appropriation amounts, that SSA would have to institute a furlough of employees.

We appreciate the fact that SSA provided the above information and provided it to us promptly. This helped a lot in educating legislators regarding the fact that failure to fully fund SSA's FY11 appropriations request would result in adverse affects on those who file claims, appeals and report post entitlement events to the Agency.

This week we learned that the leadership of the House of Representatives has proposed an SSA appropriation for FY 11 that is \$1.7 billion below SSA's request. We understand that passage of this proposed appropriation would result in a month of furloughs for SSA employees in FY 11.

SSA employees are concerned about the actions of Congress and the impact such actions will have on both their employment status and on their ability to service the public. I think that it is extremely important that you publically fight for the budget that you proposed for SSA for FY 11. I think that it is also extremely important for you to inform the public what the effect would be if Congress either cut the budget for FY 11 below the FY10 appropriated amount or voted to continue funding SSA at the FY10 appropriated amount. The public, Congress and SSA employees need to know the benchmark figure that is required in the appropriations for FY11 which would avoid furloughs. They need specific information from SSA on what would happen to workloads if Congress adopted the cuts proposed by the House of Representatives to the Agency's FY 11 request.

You have a unique ability to provide vital information which may sway the debate in Congress and can convince legislatures that it is essential to fully fund SSA's administrative budget pursuant to your FY 11 request. It's one thing for AFGE to present the case. It's another thing for the head of the Agency to do it.

Please fight for your budget.

Sincerely,

/s/

Witold Skwierczynski
President

