



Dear Senate and House Members of the California Delegation,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, many of whom are members of the Californians for SSI (CA4SSI) coalition, we thank you for your support of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program and ask for your commitment to preserve and strengthen this vital program.

As part of our nation's Social Security system, Supplemental Security Income was enacted in 1972 to reduce poverty by providing modest financial support for extremely low-income seniors and people with disabilities. Today, the federal SSI program reduces poverty for 8.3 million recipients, including 1.3 million seniors and people with disabilities living in California.

In California, nearly half of those receiving SSI are 65 or older. Individuals who are eligible based on disability must meet one of the most stringent disability standards among developed nations. The grant amount provided by the federal government is less than the federal poverty level for a single person. Even after California adds a state supplement (SSP) to the SSI benefit, the benefit is still below the federal poverty level for a single individual. In fact, single California SSI/SSP recipients have incomes of \$895 per month, well below the poverty level or the supplemental poverty measure. In every California county the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a studio apartment is more than half of the SSI/SSP grant, and in 16 counties, where the majority of the state's SSI recipients reside, the FMR exceeds the grant entirely. This forces SSI recipients who rely entirely on this support to make tradeoffs among basic needs of rent, food, transportation, and utilities.

The SSI program is a critical safety net within our nation's social insurance programs. It helps ensure stability for the most vulnerable Americans—seniors and people with disabilities at the very lowest income levels—and it should not be subject to cuts.

We call on you to maintain and strengthen the structure of the SSI program.

SSI provides a foundation for seniors and people with disabilities to live with dignity in the community, including many of your constituents. SSI should be expanded to meet its promise of reducing poverty and ensuring quality of life.

Housing: SSI provides a reliable stream of monthly income that helps seniors and people with disabilities live in the community. Most landlords reject applicants who lack a regular monthly income, making SSI a key for recipients who are homeless to secure a lease. Without SSI, many recipients would face homelessness or be forced into institutions at a far higher cost to government than the amount provided to SSI recipients.

Health insurance: Categorical eligibility for Medi-Cal for SSI recipients in California helps recipients access medical care to maintain or improve health, and prevent worsening of medical conditions.

Working families: SSI's modest financial support helps low-income families offset some of the extraordinary costs of raising a child with a disability. Families raising children with disabilities are more than twice as likely as other families with children to face material hardships such as homelessness and food insecurity.

Our diverse organizations have joined together across the aging, disability rights, housing and homeless, anti-hunger, and anti-poverty sectors because we see every day the need for the economic lifeline that SSI provides for low-income seniors, people with disabilities, and their families and communities.

We urge you to protect and strengthen SSI, and reject any proposals to change the program's basic structure, or enact cuts to the program.

Signed,

ACLU of Southern California	National Association of Social Workers, California Chapter
Aging Services Collaborative (ASC) of Santa Clara County	Orange County Food Access Coalition
AIDS Legal Referral Panel	Personal Assistance Services Council of Los Angeles County
Alameda County Community Food Bank	Project Angel Food
CA Association of Food Banks	Redwood Empire Food Bank
California Alliance for Retired Americans	Resources for Independent Living
California Association of Public Authorities for IHSS (CAPA)	Senior & Disability Action
California Food Policy Advocates	Senior Advocates of the Desert
California IHSS Consumer Alliance (CICA)	Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County
California OneCare	SF-Marin Food Bank
California Partnership	Silicon Valley Independent Living Center
Coalition of California Welfare Rights Organizations, Inc.	St. Anthony Foundation
Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL)	St. Mary's Center
Disability Rights California (DRC)	The Gubbio Project
Educate. Advocate.	West Marin Senior Services
Feeding San Diego	Western Center on Law & Poverty
Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano	Yolo Healthy Aging Alliance
Food for People, Inc.	
Friends In Deed	
Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network	
Homeless Action Center	
Hospitality House	
Hunger Action LA	
Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles	
Jewish Labor Committee Western Region	
Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California	
Justice in Aging	
Mercy Brown Bag Program	
Multi-faith ACTION Coalition	

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Taking Initiative for Our Neighbors



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