



June 21, 2016

The Honorable Rick Nolan
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Nolan:

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I am writing to endorse your bill, H.R. 5342, the *Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2016*. Your legislation would offer Social Security beneficiaries a one-time emergency benefit payment equal to a 3.9 percent pay raise in response to no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2016.

The absence of a COLA this year will force many seniors to choose between paying for food, prescription medication and/or heating bills. Over half of Medicare beneficiaries had incomes below \$23,500 per year in 2013, and they are already paying 23 percent of their average Social Security check for out-of-pocket health care costs. In addition, this year all Medicare beneficiaries will pay a 13.6 percent increase in the Part B deductible and 30 percent of beneficiaries will shoulder a 17 percent increase in their Part B premiums. The emergency benefit provided in H.R. 5342 would help millions of seniors absorb these mounting costs.

Furthermore, your legislation would adopt the Consumer Price Index for the Elderly (CPI-E) for the purpose of determining cost-of-living-adjustments for Social Security beneficiaries. Since the current CPI does not account for the differences in the spending patterns of the elderly, such as higher health care expenditures, a fully developed CPI-E would more accurately measure how inflation affects America's seniors.

Thank you for introducing the *Fair COLA for Seniors Act of 2016* and for your enduring commitment to strengthening retirement security. We look forward to working with you to pass this common-sense legislation.

Sincerely,

Max Richtman
President and CEO