

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SECURITY

...don't cut it.

June 18, 2013

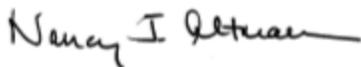
Dear Senator,

We write in support of Senator Hirono's forthcoming amendment to the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act (S. 744). The amendment allows "lawfully present individuals," as defined by the underlying bill, who are employed and paying all required taxes to access the federal insurance programs and safety net programs they have contributed to and paid for with their tax dollars.

Although not widely understood, undocumented workers pay a myriad of state and federal taxes, including sales, property, payroll and income tax. According to the Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration, some three-quarters of undocumented workers pay Social Security and Medicare contributions. From 2001 to 2010, Social Security had \$719 billion in un-credited earnings, most of which have been paid from undocumented workers. Also, in 2006, then IRS Commissioner Mark Everson told Congress that many undocumented workers, "utilizing ITINs [individual taxpayer identification numbers for undocumented workers], have been reporting tax liability to the tune of almost \$50 billion from 1996 to 2003."

It is important to note that the Hirono amendment simply maintains current law with respect to Social Security and Medicare. Current law appropriately recognizes that workers whether undocumented or not, earn their Social Security. Once legal, they can and should be able to receive credit for all of their contributions. In addition, it is only a logical step forward to allow them to receive safety net benefits, as well. A reality of our broken immigration system is that many employees who lack work authorization have contributed for many years to federal social insurance programs and the government's general fund through their taxes. Let's build on the one part that is working, and allow them to benefit from the monies they pay.

We urge you to support the Hirono Amendment when it is offered.



Nancy Altman
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