



1440 G Street, NW
Washington D.C. 20005

The Honorable Ricardo Lara
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 562, The Healthy California Act Support

Dear Senator Lara,

Social Security Works (SSW) is most pleased to state our strong support for your exciting bill, SB 562, The Healthy California Act. SSW is a national organization fighting to protect the health and economic security of disadvantaged and at risk populations. Our mission is to advocate for those who are dependent, now and in the future, on America's great social insurance programs.

California's poverty rate for aging Americans is growing. Last year, the Sacramento Bee reported that between 1999 and 2014 the number of impoverished Californians age 65 and older increased by 85 percent. The report also cited that many of these seniors are mostly single, a large majority are women, and often are minorities. In 2015, the Kaiser Foundation reported that 70 percent of our aging population will need some form of long-term services and support. For many seniors living in or almost in poverty, Medicaid is the only source of funding for both nursing home care and in-home long term care services. Tragically, the White House and Congress are proposing radical and harmful changes to these programs that will cause profound suffering to seniors, their caregivers, and their families.

At no time in our nation's history have we seen our safety net programs at such great risk. The Republicans continue to demonstrate a complete lack of compassion by proposing horrendous cuts to Medicaid. The Republicans' health care bill "The American Health Care Act" proposes a massive \$880 billion cut to Medicaid, and the President's budget proposes a \$616 billion cut from this vital program. Medicaid is a lifeline for many low and moderate income seniors and disabled citizens in need of long-term care services and support.

When enacted, The Healthy California Act will guarantee that every state resident will receive comprehensive health care services, similar to the idea of "Medicare for All". Individuals, of all ages, will have free choice in selecting from many licensed health professionals and services.

The main features of The Healthy California Act include:

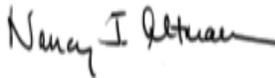
- Giving provider choice. There will be no more surprise bills and no out-of-pocket costs for covered services.
- Eliminating co-pays for Medicare Part B.
- Lowering prescription drug costs.

- Starting regional planning to reduce overlap and duplication of expensive equipment and facilities.
- Including exciting and worthwhile advances of the Affordable Care Act.
- Reducing bureaucracy leading to major cost savings.
- Creating a diverse group of ordinary citizens, representatives of labor, business, various health care professionals, and policy experts will advise and help design the Health California program.
- Using a Healthy California premium—a progressive premium that will result in significant out-of-pocket net savings.

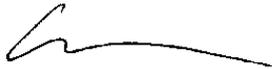
Thank you for your leadership on this very important set of issues. We look forward to working with your office as well as partners and organizations throughout California in the passage of SB 562.

You can contact Ernie Powell, our State Grassroots Director, who resides in Los Angeles, California, and is available for any follow up and campaign planning. You can contact him at epowell@socialsecurityworks.org or (916) 761-5718.

Sincerely,



Nancy J. Altman
President



Alex Lawson
Executive Director