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**Democratic Caucus Seniors Task Force Co-Chairs Issue Statement on Social Security Office Lockouts**

*Lockouts Start This Week as a Result of Republican Policies*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, House Democratic Caucus Seniors Task Force co-chairs Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) released the following statement in response to the fact that starting this week, Social Security field offices have begun closing to the public early due to significant cuts in its operating budget:

“It is unconscionable that America's seniors are made to suffer as a result of the cuts to the Social Security Administration forced by House Republicans,” said Rep. Doris Matsui. “Social Security has not added a dime to the deficit, yet its beneficiaries are seeing limited services – and could soon see limited benefits – as a result of ideological posturing from Republican leaders. America’s seniors deserve better and I will continue to stand up and oppose such cuts to Social Security.”

“The decision to begin closing Social Security offices early is a signal of things to come as House Republicans insist on slashing federal spending that helps seniors,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky. “This is proof that contrary to their promises, Republican proposals are already hurting current Social Security beneficiaries. Social Security benefits and the operations of the Social Security Administration have nothing to do with our deficit and yet our seniors and the disabled will have to pay the price for Republicans’ insistence on protecting tax cuts for billionaires and millionaires. This decision is a glimpse of what effect the Republicans’ push for severe spending cuts will have on the day-to-day experience of all Americans seeking access to government offices and federal benefits they have earned.”

During 2010, an estimated 157 million people had earnings covered by Social Security and paid payroll taxes, and Social Security paid benefits of \$702 billion. The cost of \$6.5 billion to

administer the program in 2010 was a very low 0.9 percent of total expenditures. But despite these low administrative costs, spending cuts forced by House Republicans have resulted in \$1 billion less in appropriations than the Social Security Administration (SSA) requested and needed for Fiscal Year 2011. In response, SSA is forced to begin requiring field offices nationwide to close to the public 30 minutes early each day. For example, a field office that is usually open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. will close daily at 3:30 p.m.

Beneficiaries should know that most Social Security services are also available online or via telephone. Anyone wishing to apply for benefits, sign up for direct deposit or replace a Medicare card can do so at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov) or by dialing the toll-free number: 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

For more information on the Democratic Caucus Seniors Task Force, visit [dems.gov/seniors](http://dems.gov/seniors) .  
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