Strengthening Social Security and Services for People with Disabilities

Social Security is indispensable to workers, retirees, survivors, and people with disabilities, and is one of the most important and successful programs ever established in the United States. Although current forecasts indicate that the combined Social Security Trust Funds can pay full benefits until 2033, the Administration is committed to ensuring that the program is solvent and viable for the American people, now and in the future, and the President has laid out key principles to achieve this objective. Any reforms should strengthen retirement security for the most vulnerable, including low-income seniors, and should maintain robust disability and survivors' benefits. The Administration will oppose any measures that privatize or weaken the Social Security system and will not accept an approach that slashes benefits for future generations or reduces basic benefits for current beneficiaries.

To address reserve depletion of the Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Fund, the Budget proposes to reallocate existing payroll tax collections between the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance (OASI) and DI trust funds while a longer-term solution to overall Social Security solvency is developed with the Congress. At various points over the course of Social Security's history, the Congress has passed reallocation legislation as the need arose for reallocating revenue from DI to OASI, and vice versa. This proposed reallocation will have no effect on the overall health of the OASI and DI trust funds on a combined basis.

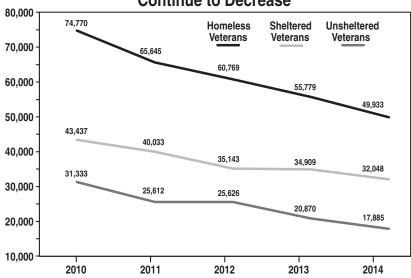
The Budget also includes initiatives to help people with disabilities remain in the workforce. It builds on the bipartisan support for these efforts in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, by providing new authority and \$400 million in new resources for the Social Security Administration (SSA), in partnership with other Federal agencies, to test innovative strategies to help people with disabilities remain in the workforce. The cost would be offset by a proposal to better coordinate DI and Federal retroactive disability payments between SSA and the Office of

Personnel Management (OPM.) Early-intervention measures, such as supportive employment services for individuals with mental impairments, targeted incentives for employers to help workers with disabilities remain on the job, and incentives and opportunities for States to better coordinate services, have the potential to achieve long-term gains in the employment and the quality of life of people with disabilities, and the proposed demonstrations will help build the evidence base for future program improvements.

To address increasing wait times for a disability appeal decision, the Budget proposes to increase the hiring of Administrative Law Judges (ALJ). SSA's workloads continue to increase as the baby boom generation enters its most disability-prone years. The average wait time for a disability decision before an ALJ reached a record high of 18.5 months in August 2008. SSA was able to reduce the wait time down to a 10-year low of 12 months in 2011 and 2012, but due to funding constraints, the wait time has begun to grow again and is anticipated to rise above 16 months in 2015. Currently there are over one million people waiting for a disability appeals hearing decision from an ALJ. The Budget commits increased resources to hire more ALJs. But resources alone will not be enough. The process for hiring SSA ALJs has not operated efficiently as is needed to fill vacancies even when funding is available. Therefore, the Administration is creating a workgroup led by the Administrative Conference of the United States and OPM, along with SSA, DOJ, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to review the process of hiring ALJs and recommend ways to eliminate roadblocks, which may include proposing administrative reforms or legislative changes.

To continue to strengthen the integrity and accuracy of Social Security, the Budget proposes to establish a dependable source of mandatory funding in 2017 for Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs) and Supplemental Security Income Redeterminations, which ensure that only those eligible for benefits continue to receive them. SSA estimates that each \$1 spent on CDRs would save the Federal Government \$9. This proposal,

Rates of Homelessness Among Veterans Continue to Decrease



Source: Department of Housing and Urban Development. The 2014 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, Part 1.

together with discretionary funding proposed for 2016, could produce net savings of \$32 billion over 10 years and reduce the current backlog of 906,000 overdue CDRs.

Ending Homelessness

In 2010, the President set ambitious goals to end homelessness across the Nation, and since then significant progress has been made. Major cities have hit important milestones toward the goals including New Orleans, Louisiana, which has ended veteran homelessness, and Salt Lake City, Utah and Phoenix, Arizona, which have ended chronic homelessness among veterans. Over 300 mayors, governors, and county executives have committed to ending veteran homelessness in their communities through the Mayors Challenge to End Veteran Homelessness.

The overall number of veterans experiencing homelessness has declined by 33 percent—nearly 25,000 veterans—since 2010, and with continued focus from Federal, State, and local partners, we are on a path to end veteran homelessness by the end of 2015. The Budget continues to make investments to end chronic homelessness in 2017 and to make significant progress in ending homelessness across all other populations. In addition to targeted increases in HUD's Homeless Assistance Grants, the Budget provides 67,000 new Housing Choice Vouchers to support low-income households, including families experiencing homelessness; survivors of domestic and dating violence; families with children in foster care; youth aging out of foster care; and homeless veterans, regardless of their discharge status.

ENSURING SAFETY, FAIRNESS, AND COMMUNITY TRUST IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The President has said that if anyone in the American family feels they have been treated unfairly it is a problem for all Americans. That is why the President is committed to ensuring the criminal justice system is safe, fair, and trustworthy for all Americans. In addition to supporting

the enhancement of community policing practices across the Nation, the Budget proposes to prioritize DOJ's resources on criminals who pose the most serious threats to American citizens' safety, support Federal reentry programs that help reduce recidivism, and combat violent extremism.