



Adopted April 29, 2014

Resolution

Social Security Field Office Closings and Service Cuts

Whereas the Social Security Administration (SSA) has seen its budget frozen or reduced in each of the past several years resulting in 11,000 fewer staff to handle an ever increasing work load of retirement and disability applications, as well as the other essential services that SSA field offices provide to the public; and

Whereas in recent years, SSA has closed more than 70 field offices and hundreds of contact stations around the country, and reduced hours so that offices are open to the public only until noon on Wednesdays and close 1 ½ hours early on other weekdays. This represents a 28 percent reduction in time spent helping people face-to-face to gain access to their benefits under Social Security; and

Whereas Social Security beneficiaries have always received, have had the right to receive, and indeed have already paid to receive, the highest quality personal service offered to more than 53 million program participants; and

Whereas high-quality service is threatened both by budget cuts and by a concerted effort on the part of the agency to

nearly eliminate field offices and personal service as described in a recent document produced by a seven member panel of the National Academy of Public Administration under contract to the Social Security Administration, which included three former high-ranking SSA officials; and

Whereas the SSA 2014-2018 Agency Strategic Plan specifically cites the “Vision 2025” plan referenced above, and thereby has signaled high-level support for this approach that is hostile to the interests of the American people; and

Whereas public confidence in SSA’s ability to deliver on its promises is being threatened by the continuous announcements of office closures, reduced office hours around the nation, and service reductions at field offices; and

Whereas SSA has decided to stop providing two essential documents at SSA field offices, the Social Security Number Printout and the Benefit Verification statement, and 11 million people who came in last year to get these documents will be told they must go online and print them out, request that prospective employers verify their Social Security Numbers, ask other service-providers to get the information themselves, or contact the Call Center and wait a week or more to receive these vital verifications needed to receive assistance from other service-providers or to verify eligibility to work.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans supports and will work for the passage of legislation introduced by Rep. Brian Higgins (D-NY) and John Duncan (R-TN), H.R. 3997, the Social Security Accountability Act of 2014, to impose an immediate moratorium on further closures until SSA explains its plan for future closings, the

reasoning for it, and how it will mitigate the impact on the public; and

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) and other unions will work with the Social Security Works Coalition, the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations and community organizations to expand the resources and front-line staffing available for SSA operations and fight to restore field office service delivery as the most critical part of the SSA infrastructure; and

Be it further resolved that the Social Security Administration place a moratorium on Social Security Office closings and services cuts.