

Kriss Worthington

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CONSENT CALENDAR
June 11, 2013

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Support CARA's Campaign to Protect Social Security, Medicare, and

Medicaid

RECOMMENDATION:

Support the California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) Campaign to Protect Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid as reflected in Assembly Joint Resolution 7 (Bonta) and to send letters to our federal representatives.

BACKGROUND:

In January 2013 the California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) released a "Toolkit to: Defend, Protect and Extend Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security." According to the toolkit, Social Security accounts for more than half the income for two-thirds of seniors and, by law, cannot contribute to the federal deficit. Medicare costs have been far more stable than private health insurance plans and are projected to rise at a much lower rate than private plans over the next decade. Cuts to these programs would affect millions of seniors, people with disabilities, and disadvantaged people. Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid are the "three pillars of our social service safety net," cuts to these programs would ultimately leave millions of Americans without access to these most basic services, to which they are rightly entitled to and depend on to survive.

In response to CARA's campaign, Assembly member Bonta introduced Assembly Joint Resolution (AJR) 7. According to the bill, "[AJR 7] would request the President and members of the United States Congress to exclude Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid from being part of any legislation to reduce the federal deficit [and to] consider improving those systems in ways that would strengthen their protections."

According to the findings listed in the bill:

- Social Security prevents more than 1.1 million Californians from living in poverty
- Over 5 million Californians are provided monthly cash benefits and health insurance
- Funding from Social Security is independent from the rest of the federal government
- Raising the payroll tax rate from 6.2 to 7.2 percent gradually over 20 years would eliminate one-half of the shortfall
- Medicare covers nearly 4 million of California's seniors and has controlled its cots better than private insurance plans

- Medicaid is a critical source of protection for over 11 million low-income children, adults, and elderly Californians

We need to take a stand to defend these three "pillars of our social service safety net" that provide millions of Californians with basic, fundamental protections.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None.

CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 510-981-7170

Attached:

1. Letter to Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer and Congresswoman Barbara Lee

Dear Senator Dianne Feinstein, Barbara Boxer, and Congresswoman Barbara Lee,

We urge you to support AJR 7 (Bonta) and the CARA (California Alliance of Retired Americans) campaign to stand up for those who are not able to afford the basic protections many of us take for granted. AJR 7 (Bonta) calls upon President Obama and Congress to exclude Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid from any legislation to reduce the federal deficit. AJR 7 (Bonta) also declares that Social Security is critical to the economic well-being of beneficiaries and is a fundamental protection against risks that all Californians face. It affirms that Social Security belongs to the people who have worked hard and contributed to the program, and is based on the premise that those who contribute may also benefit through retirement, disability, or death. CARA, a statewide nonprofit organization and state affiliate of the Alliance for Retired Americans, unites retired workers for social and economic justice, full civil rights, and a better, more secure future for the elderly, families, and future generations. CARA is working tirelessly to preserve and strengthen Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. We fully support their efforts and urge you to oppose any legislation to reduce the federal deficit that includes cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. We must find ways to improve these programs, not to dismantle them. These services reach millions of Californians. and millions more across the nation. Without assistance from these programs, millions would be unable to obtain life insurance, pay their rent, or go to the doctor. We need to protect the vulnerable member of our community who rely on these programs to survive. We urge you to support AJR 7 and CARA's Education Fund to educate others about social services and preserve our social service safety net. 0

Sincerely, The Berkeley City Council