For immediate release:

April 27, 2016

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**99% Of Older Voters Disagree With Recent Social Security Cut Tactics**

*According to New Survey By The Senior Citizens League*

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**(Washington, DC) –** Two controversial Social Security changes that go into effect at the end of this month may come back to haunt Congressional incumbents at the polls later this year, warns the Senior Citizens League (TSCL). “Congress touched the third rail when they abruptly closed two so - called Social Security “loop holes” — claiming strategies known as “file and suspend” and “restricted application,” says TSCL Chairman Ed Cates.

Ninety - nine percent of older voters said they are upset over the tactics that Congress used to enact the surprise Social Security changes negotiated during last fall’s closed - door debt limit deal. Results from a new national survey that TSCL is releasing today found that survey respondents disapproved of:

* The threat of nonpayment of Social Security benefits, Medicare and other federal benefits to force votes on lifting the debt limit.
* Demanding entitlement cuts in exchange for votes to lift the debt limit.
* Secret, closed door negotiations between Congressional leadership and President Obama that included surprise Social Security changes.

“Social Security benefit cuts have no place in legislation to lift the debt limit,” Cates says. “Our federal government has borrowed about $2.8 trillion in payroll taxes meant to pay Social Security benefits, and there should be no question of honoring the obligation to repay that debt,” Cates states.

The [changes](https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/suspend.html) cut the retirement income that many married couples were counting on — for some by tens of thousands of dollars. People who are younger than age 66 by [April 30, 2016](https://www.ssa.gov/planners/retire/suspend.html) are affected. Another group of future retirees who had not turned 62 by the end of 2015 were affected by a related change. “Many of the people affected by these cuts are too close to retirement to adjust their savings,” Cates notes.

The Bipartisan Budget Act, signed into law last November, ended two Social Security claiming strategies for married couples, known as “file and suspend” and “restricted application.” It took four months for Social Security to post guidance for the new claiming rules, leaving only 60 days for those affected to take action by April 30, 2016.

TSCL believes the speed at which the changes are being implemented is both unprecedented and unnecessary. “These cuts in Social Security benefits are not only unjustified, but affect people who are already over the age of 62 and at retirement age,” says Cates. “By implementing these cuts so abruptly, without phasing them in over a long period of time to allow future retirees enough time to learn about them and plan accordingly, Congress has made the pain even worse,” Cates says. “We urge voters to let Congressional candidates know how you feel about these benefit cuts and to learn the candidates’ plans for the future of Social Security,” he adds.

What do you think about these changes? To participate in TSCL surveys, visit [www.SeniorsLeague.org](http://www.SeniorsLeague.org).

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*With 1.2 million supporters, The Senior Citizens League is one of the nation’s largest nonpartisan seniors groups. Its mission is to promote and assist members and supporters, to educate and alert senior citizens about their rights and freedoms as U.S. Citizens, and to protect and defend the benefits senior citizens have earned and paid for. The Senior Citizens League is a proud affiliate of The Retired Enlisted Association. Visit* [*www.SeniorsLeague.org*](http://www.SeniorsLeague.org) *for more information.*