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**Gridlock Over Fixing Social Security Disability Would Mean Benefit Cuts,**

**Warns The Senior Citizens League**

**Alexandria, VA:** Congressional gridlock over the looming insolvency of the Social Security disability insurance program would put the benefits of about 11 million disabled Social Security beneficiaries at risk, warns The Senior Citizens League (TSCL). According to the Social Security trustees, the disability insurance trust fund will exhaust its resources by the end of next year. If Congress fails to address the disability program’s funding problems, benefits would have to be reduced by about one fifth to adjust to the level of payroll taxes that the program receives. “Congress needs to take timely action soon to avoid creating a financing crisis for millions of our nation’s sickest and most vulnerable Social Security beneficiaries,” says TSCL Chairman Ed Cates.

 According to a December report from the Social Security Inspector General[[1]](#endnote-1), legislation will be necessary to permit beneficiaries to receive their full benefit payments. Even though the financial condition of Social Security is often reported as just one trust fund that is financially sound until 2033, there are actually two trust funds and they operate separately. Current law does not permit one Social Security trust fund to borrow from the other — Congress must pass legislation to do so, the Inspector General’s report says.

 The new Congress, however, passed a procedural rule in the House that would make it more difficult to transfer funds from the retirement to the disability trust fund. The rule would restrict transfers from one trust fund to the other unless they are accompanied by a larger Social Security reform plan that either reduces benefits or increase taxes. Congress has known about the disability insurance program’s shortfall for years, but so far there’s been little discussion over how to address it.

 TSCL’s annual surveys of older Americans suggest there is no support for cutting annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs). However, a TSCL survey conducted last year found that 85 percent of those responding supported tax changes that would require high wage earners to pay Social Security taxes on all of their earnings. A TSCL poll found that forty-five percent support tightening the disability program’s eligibility criteria and conducting more annual eligibility reviews to reduce fraud.

 What do you think? The Senior Citizens League is conducting a [survey](http://tscl.org/2015survey) of Social Security recipients to better understand what they would support to fix Social Security’s financing. To participate, visit [www.SeniorsLeague.org](http://www.SeniorsLeague.org).

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 With about 1 million supporters, The Senior Citizens League is one of the nation's largest nonpartisan seniors groups. Located just outside Washington, D.C., 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 TREA The Enlisted Association. Please visit www.SeniorsLeague.org or call 1-800-333-8725 for more information.

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1. “Disability Insurance Trust Fund,” Office of the Inspector General, Social Security Administration, December 2014, A-15-15-15024, <http://oig.ssa.gov/audits-and-investigations/audit-reports/A-15-15-15024>. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)