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**What Is Your Social Security Check Missing? About $153**

*Retirees Need An Emergency COLA, Says The Senior Citizens League*

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**(Washington, DC) –** Low inflation is striking another blow to the long - term Social Security income of millions of older and disabled Americans, according to a new analysis by The Senior Citizens League (TSCL). “For the third time in only 7 years, older Americans will not see any Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) increase in their Social Security benefits,” says TSCL Chairman, Ed Cates. “For tens of millions of people this has a devastating impact on the long-term adequacy of their benefits,” he says. The Social Security Administration recently announced that more than 59 million beneficiaries would not receive an annual COLA next year, because inflation was lower this year than it was a year ago.

Since 2009, COLAs have been at record lows, averaging just 1.4% — less than half the more typical 3% that COLAs averaged in the prior decade. According to the TSCL analysis, over the last seven years, average Social Security benefits will be about $153 a month lower in 2016 than if inflation had been the more normal levels of about 3%. For example, had a married couple — retired since 2009 and receiving about $2,330 per month received a more typical 3% COLA — their total Social Security income would be about $10,700 more than it has actually been since 20009.

Using [statistical data](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/supplement/2015/index.html) from the Social Security Administration, TSCL estimates about 88 percent of Social Security beneficiaries have received benefits during the 2009 – 2015 period and have been impacted the hardest. “[With 64 percent of older Americans depending on Social Security for over half of their income](http://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast_facts/2015/index.html), going without a COLA is a loss of income that most beneficiaries simply can’t be expected to bear,” Cates says. Spiking medical costs are causing retirees to go into debt, and run through their savings,” he adds.

Today TSCL is calling on every Member of Congress to provide emergency COLA and Medicare relief for 2016, saying that Congress should:

1. **Provide Social Security beneficiaries with an emergency COLA.** Medical costs are on the rise, and many seniors are currently experiencing excessive prescription drug price increases of 1,000% or more. Those increases are not reflected in the COLA since it is based on the way young, urban workers spend their money, using the [CPI-W](http://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2012/ted_20120302.htm). TSCL feels strongly that a modest one-time payment of $250 would give seniors much-needed relief next year.
2. **Prevent a 50 percent Medicare premium hike from taking effect.** According to the Medicare Trustees, an estimated 15 million Medicare beneficiaries will be hit with Part B premium hikes of 50 percent next year, along with $80 increases in deductibles. TSCL believes that the abrupt and dramatic increase must be prevented, and we hope Congress will pass legislation like the *Protecting Medicare Beneficiaries Act* (S. 2148) or the *Medicare Premium Fairness Act* (H.R. 3696).

To learn how you can join the effort for an Emergency COLA and Medicare relief, 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.*