



MEMBERSHIP INVITATION

A Message from NCSSMA President Joe Dirago

In November 2009, at the 40th Annual National Council of Social Security Management Associations (NCSSMA) in Tampa, Florida, I was elected President. It is an honor and a privilege to represent 3,400 Social Security management personnel in the ten Regional Management Associations. One of my challenges to the delegates and members was to spread the word about the positive impact NCSSMA has for our agency and its employees. This communication is part of that effort.

I want to personally invite you to come join us, by becoming a member of the New York Region Management Society. We need your participation and support to make our organization truly representative of the viewpoints of all Field Office and Teleservice Center managers and supervisors. At both the regional and national levels, the Management Association is recognized and respected as an organization that improves the management and program administration in the Social Security Administration in a positive and professional manner.

This flyer provides you with information about our organization and some recent significant events we have been involved with. You should also consider that a Regional Association, through the National Council, has assumed an active advocacy role to protect federal employee compensation and benefits. Please look at the [NCSSMA Website](#) for information about our purpose and goals, how we operate, and our members' concerns. We also produce a quarterly newsletter – [FrontLine](#) that is interesting and informative.

We hope that you will join us and help make a difference! Please see the Membership Application, sign up today so that you may immediately be added to our mailing list, and receive our communications.

Federal Budget Battles Concern NCSSMA – Meet with Key Congressional Staff

Under the leadership of President Joe Dirago, NCSSMA is working hard to educate members of Congress about the impacts of different budget scenarios on SSA and the public we serve. On February 9th and 10th, a small delegation of NCSSMA representatives attended several meetings on Capitol Hill with this intent. The delegation included President Joe Dirago, Vice President Steve Clifton, Past President Greg Heineman, Executive Officer Scott Hale, DRMA President Peggy Buchanan, and CSSMA President Rick Lenoir. Rachel Emmons, NCSSMA's Washington Representative, arranged meetings with key staff from the House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee, the House Budget Committee, the House Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, the Senate Finance Committee, and the Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee. In preparation for the meetings, NCSSMA asked our members for their feedback on a possible hiring freeze and inadequate funding.

NCSSMA prepared communications and workload charts to illustrate the growth in SSA workloads between FY 2004 and 2010, the impact of different budget scenarios and to provide NCSSMA member feedback regarding the budget. The delegation was able to explain the effect of budget cuts on the workloads, employees and the Americans who rely on SSA to get the job done.

NCSSMA continues to work with key folks on the Hill, SSA leadership and the advocacy community to deliver our message about adequate funding for our agency. We will keep you updated on the latest information as we pursue these budget matters to achieve the best outcome possible for the public we serve and SSA employees.



NCSSMA Leadership, Washington, D.C. – February 2011 - Clockwise from lower left: Joe Dirago, Scott Hale, Greg Heineman, Rachel Emmons, Steve Clifton, Rick Lenoir and Peggy Buchanan

NCSSMA Testifies at Senate Appropriations Hearing on SSA Budget

On March 9, 2011, NCSSMA President Joe Dirago testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies regarding the Fiscal Year 2011 and 2012 Funding for the Social Security Administration. NCSSMA is recognized as a strong voice relative to the administration of the Social Security program and is often requested to testify at Congressional hearings on SSA-related matters.

Senators attending the hearing included Chairman Tom Harkin (Iowa), Ranking Member Richard Shelby (Alabama), Barbara Mikulski (Maryland) and Jack Reed (Rhode Island). The hearing was well attended by agency leadership, interested parties, the media and several members of the NCSSMA Executive Committee, who were on Capitol Hill to conduct meetings with Congressional representatives.

In his opening statement, Chairman Harkin indicated that the hearing was convened to address the important topic of administrative funding for the Social Security Administration. He expressed concerns about adequate funding for SSA and the House Continuing Resolution, H.R. 1, which would cut funding below the FY 2010 level, even though the agency's key workloads are increasing. SSA Commissioner Michael Astrue testified on the first panel and expressed concerns about the ability of the agency to deliver services. He said that because appropriations bills were not passed, SSA's staff may be reduced by 3,500 employees this fiscal year. The Commissioner said, "I regret we may not be able to meet our commitments to the American people...we are barely above the level where we need to furlough."

During my oral testimony, I indicated that NCSSMA's top priority is a strong and stable Social Security Administration. We have significant concerns about funding the agency to maintain service levels vital to millions of Americans, as a result of the economic downturn and the 80 million baby boomers who will file for benefits by 2030. I pointed out that appropriations for SSA are an excellent investment, with significant productivity gains and program integrity savings of approximately \$6 Billion in FY 2010. However, I indicated that the repercussions of the current CR have already been felt. Feedback from offices indicates many are struggling trying to keep up with the increased walk-in and telephone traffic. I explained that with the potential retirement of up to 50 percent of SSA's employees by 2018, concerns exist about the loss of institutional knowledge and geographical staffing imbalances. This will leave some offices severely understaffed. In conclusion, I indicated that Social Security is the safety net of America and must be maintained as such. If adequate funding is not provided, public service will suffer, resulting in significant hardship for millions. During the question and answer portion of the hearing, I expressed concerns about our situation and the need for Congress to adequately fund Social Security. The responses and comments of the Chairman and the Ranking Member clearly indicated that they heard our message and understand the gravity of the situation.

I encourage you to go to the [NCSSMA Website](http://www.ncssma.org) to view a webcast of the hearing. This hearing is just one in a number of initiatives that NCSSMA is pursuing to achieve the goals set forth by our membership. Following the hearing NCSSMA representatives conducted 72 meetings with Congressional representatives to advocate for membership. This included a meeting with the Ranking Member of the House Social Security Subcommittee Xavier Becerra. The NCSSMA Executive Committee and I will continue to advocate for the appropriate SSA funding and work hard on your behalf.

Go to www.ncssma.org for more information!