



AFSCME **Retirees Bulletin**

The Fiscal Commission Act: Threatens Retiree Security **Tell Congress to Say NO to the Fiscal Commission Act**

In January, the House Budget Committee approved the Fiscal Commission Act (H.R. 5779). AFSCME opposes this bill because it threatens retiree health and economic security and more. AFSCME urges Congress to vote NO on the bill and similar proposals calling for a fiscal commission. This bill inaccurately labels government spending as a crisis instead of asking if government investments in public services and federal benefits are sufficient to meet needs. The bill calls for a commission to address a so-called debt or fiscal crisis, undoubtedly putting Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security and other spending, benefits and services in the crosshairs.

Top Five Reasons to say No to the Fiscal Commission Act.

- 1) An earlier fiscal commission gave public service retirees the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).** In the 1980s, the National Commission on Social Security Reform (called the Greenspan Commission) made recommendations to cut Social Security benefits. In 1983, Congress did enact Social Security benefit cuts, including one that unfairly penalizes public pensioners by reducing their earned Social Security benefits. In 2022, WEP hurt more than two million public pensioners.
- 2) It sidesteps the deliberative legislative process and full debate.** The Fiscal Commission Act is designed to make incredibly unpopular decisions on a tight timeline. Worse, it limits the ability of advocates to voice their concerns and prevents members of Congress from offering amendments to correct harmful provisions. With the prospect of a government shutdown and Congress seeming incapable of passing a budget, extremists see an opportunity to cut benefits and federal spending through a superfast legislative process without any amendments or debate.

- 3) **The Fiscal Commission Act does not require Congress to have needed information and analysis on how the proposed cuts will impact seniors, vulnerable Americans, and shift costs onto states and local governments *before it votes on those cuts*.** Without this information Congress will have to vote on cuts without understanding what they mean to retirees and others.

- 4) **It narrowly views funding government programs as a *math problem*, the difference between revenues and spending.** This misses the point of federal government funding, which should be about what public services we invest in and are needed to help people and keep communities strong and prosperous, and how we raise the resources needed to make the investments at the level truly needed. The deficit-only lens creates a false bias that fails to examine unmet needs and resources. This narrow view is designed to lead to cuts in public services and safety net programs.

- 5) **The American public supports revenue raising proposals, but many GOP members have strongly opposed increasing revenues.** The Fiscal Commission Act gives lip service to looking at revenues. But [Republicans have not supported](#) progressive tax fairness. They pushed expensive and unpaid-for tax breaks in 2001, 2003 and 2017, which have increased the deficit. This is not what Americans support. [Four in five](#) Americans support raising taxes on the rich and corporations to reduce the deficit compared to cutting Medicare and Social Security.

Tell Congress to Say NO to the Fiscal Commission Act

Call 1-844-331-0441 now!

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AFSCME's 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations — from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers — AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.