

March 5, 2008

Mr. Carl Hagen  
Executive Director  
Council of Seniors  
5235 Westview Drive  
Frederick, Maryland 21703-8397

Dear Mr. Hagen:

Thank you for contacting me about the preliminary Social Security totalization agreement between the United States and Mexico. I appreciate hearing your thoughts on this issue.

I understand your concerns about how this totalization agreement could result in illegal immigrants receiving Social Security benefits. However, current law prohibits Social Security payments to aliens who are not "lawfully present" in the United States. You will be happy to learn that the Senate agreed to an amendment to the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for 2008 (H. R. 3043) to send a message to the Bush administration that Congress needs to be involved in finding a workable approach to this agreement. I was happy to vote for this amendment.

The United States currently has totalization agreements with twenty-one countries. Totalization agreements have two primary purposes. They help Americans working overseas by preventing them from having to pay social security taxes in both the U.S. and the country in which they are working. Totalization agreements also make sure that workers who spend part of their careers in other countries get full credit for their work when they retire.

I will keep your views about this issue in mind when Congress has the opportunity to review the final version of this agreement.

Thanks again for getting in touch with me. Please let me know if I can be of any help to you in the future.

Sincerely,

Mr. Carl Hagen  
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*Barbara A Mikulski*

Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator

BAM:cc