February 21, 1969

Dear:

Thank you for your recent comments regarding the Social Security program. In the past Congress has re-evaluated this program almost on a yearly basis, attempting to make it more workable and equitable. I believe that changes are currently needed and should be adopted.

To be sure overall benefits must be increased so as to guarantee a decent standard of living for the retirees under the program. This will certainly be done. But other more specific problems also need attention.

A serious defect in the present system is the earnings limitation which I believe should be removed. I attempted to get the Senate Finance Committee to do this last year, but the Administration insisted that it would cost too much and they were persuasive enough to get a majority of the Committee to go along with them.

Another problem is the limitations on the eligibility of widows to draw Social Security payments. These provisions seem unusually harsh and should be modified considerably.

There is also the situation of a person who has reached retirement age but desires to continue working. Under present conditions even if he has been paying the maximum in contribution and is eligible for the maximum in benefits if he continues working, he must continue to contribute even though he cannot increase his payments by doing so. This seems unfair to me.

These are some of the areas where I would like to see some changes made. Rest assured that when the Congress considers Social Security legislation this year I intend to work for the adoption of these proposals.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
April 15, 1969

Dear:

Each of the items discussed in your recent letter will be considered during the course of hearings on either revenue reform or Social Security amendments. I have proposed several of these as amendments in the past and intend to press for adoption of them during this Congress. It seems to me that we have given all too little attention to the peculiar problems that retired persons have and that we should examine in detail the very suggestions that you make. I am hopeful that all or nearly all of them will be adopted.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
May 19, 1969

Dear :

The Administration has indicated that they will send recommendations for Social Security legislation to the Congress very soon and that one of the changes requested would be an across-the-board increase in benefits. Also, among other things, they have indicated that the minimum would be increased. Other improvements in the system will also be recommended. This legislation will first be considered by the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives.

When the measure comes to the Senate and goes to the Finance Committee I intend to explore several matters that I feel need attention. One of these is a change in the earning limitation. Another change is the problem of widows of insured workers, as well as wives who have worked and earned their own benefits. This will have full discussion in the Finance Committee.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen
United States Senate

June 5, 1969

Dear:

Sometime during the 91st Congress we will consider Social Security legislation. In the Senate it will come before the Finance Committee, of which I am a member. Not only will there be an across-the-board increase in benefits but there will be an increase in the minimum amount. These increases are needed in order to allow persons on Social Security to keep up with the rising cost of living in this country. In addition, there will be other changes made so as to improve the program.

This will have careful attention.

Sincerely,

Everett McKinley Dirksen