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NEW REPORT DETAILS THE POLITICIZATION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION UNDER PRESIDENT BUSH

WASHINGTON — Today Reps. Henry A. Waxman, Rep. Charles B. Rangel, and Rep. Sander M. Levin, along with Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, and Reps. Obey, Miller, and DeLauro, released a new report that shows how the Social Security Administration has modified its communications strategy to undermine public confidence in Social Security.

The report, based on a review of over 4,000 pages of Social Security documents from 1995 to 2005, reveals that the agency has systematically altered agency publications, press releases, PowerPoint presentations, website content, and even its annual statements to foster the impression that Social Security is "unsustainable" and "must change." The agency's new pessimistic tone and emphasis echo President Bush's warnings about the future of Social Security.

"The job of the Social Security Administration is to run the Social Security program, not to provide political cover for President Bush," said Rep. Waxman. "The agency has sacrificed its independence and abandoned its tradition of nonpartisan administration of Social Security."

"This blatant change in message and tactics is shameless politicization," said Rep. Levin. "The Bush Administration must stop using the SSA as it tries to scare up support for privatizing Social Security. The agency must reassert its independence and promote its goal — professional, nonpartisan administration of the Social Security programs."

The report provides detailed, side-by-side examples of the changes in Social Security Administration documents during the Bush Administration. These changes include:

- "The Future of Social Security" booklet — which used to begin: "Will Social Security be there for you? Absolutely" — now begins: "Social Security must change."

- Agency press releases on the solvency of Social Security have grown more dire even as the projections of the program's long-term solvency have improved.
- Agency presentations have eliminated statements that assure beneficiaries that "there is no immediate financial crisis."
- The annual Social Security statement sent to Americans has dropped the assurance that Social Security will "be there when you retire" and no longer encourages Americans to think of Social Security as a "foundation on which to build your financial future."

The complete report is available at http://www.democrats. reform.house.gov.