

A Message From The Commissioner

From: ^Commissioner Broadcast

Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2011 11:00 AM

To: Undisclosed recipients

Subject: COMMISSIONER'S BROADCAST--02/23/11

A Message To All SSA And DDS Employees

Subject: The Budget

In periods of uncertainty, rumors and misstatements abound so I want to tell you what I know. During a Continuing Resolution (CR), we are funded at the prior year's dollar amount. While that is often called "level-funded," that term does not fit our situation because we have fixed costs like rent and guards that increase each year, and because the Recovery Act money we received last year to handle case work is not part of our CR funding. For nearly half a year, we have had less money than we had last year.

The current CR ends March 4. At that time, Congress can extend the CR again which will continue our funding at last year's level, pass a budget, or let the CR expire, essentially causing a government-wide shutdown. The truth is that we do not know what Congress will do. We are working hard to deliver the best possible result from Congress and to carefully manage the money we do receive.

As we await Congressional action, we are doing what we can to minimize the budget uncertainties from interfering with your lives and work. You should know that we are considering a variety of scenarios but we have not made any final decisions. We will do what we can to prevent furloughs caused by not having enough money to pay you. That strategy may mean tough choices like cutting back on or eliminating overtime and expanding the hiring freeze.

I regret that I cannot give you precise information about what will happen, but I am uncomfortable not letting you know some of the possible outcomes so that you can begin to plan accordingly. Given all of the uncertainty, I encourage you to be careful about believing everything you hear. I will continue to share what we know as more information becomes available.

Michael J. Astrue
Commissioner