

The National Council of Social Security Management Associations, Inc.

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- **Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1999**

On March 22nd the Senior Citizens' Freedom to Work Act of 1999 (legislation which repeals the "earnings test" for Social Security beneficiaries ages 65 through 69) passed the Senate by a vote of 100-0. There was one technical correction added by an amendment from Senate Finance Committee Chairman William V. Roth, Jr. (R-Del.) that keeps 64-year-olds from hitting a lower income limit than they would under current law. It passed by voice vote.

The Senate rejected an amendment (55-44) from Sen. Bob Kerrey (D-Neb.) that would have rewritten the Social Security Act of 1935. The phrase "retirement" would have been replaced by "eligibility for old-age benefits." Kerrey wanted this change to make people quit thinking of Social Security as a program for retirees.

Sen. Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) wanted to offer an amendment that would have required the Social Security Administration to report to Congress on the state of the program's finances. Both parties felt that it was necessary not to include any changes which might force a House-Senate conference and convinced him to try to find some other vehicle for the reporting requirements.

The bill was approved by the House (422-0) on March 1st. The legislation now moves back to the House for final passage (expected to occur this week). It will then go to President Clinton, who is expected to sign it into law.

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