**Statement of Eric Kingson**

**Syracuse March to Save Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid**

**Professor of Social Work, Syracuse University**

**Co-chair, Strengthen Social Security Coalition, Washington, D.C.**

**(**[**www.sytrengthensocialsecurity.org**](http://www.sytrengthensocialsecurity.org) **)**

**315-374-8338**

[**erkingso@syr.edu**](mailto:erkingso@syr.edu)

We are here today to send a message that our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid are public trusts. They are not to be tampered with by those who want to privatize, means test, or otherwise cut the protections that generations of Americans have built and maintained through hard work and financial contributions.

These systems were built to sustain us when wages are lost due to retirement or the death of a parent or spouse, when severe disability or illness strike.

We are here today to enlist the support of our political representatives to champion these programs and, by doing so, to champion their constituents.

We are here today to ask Representative Buerkle to acknowledge that she was wrong to support Paul Ryan’s Roadmap for America which called for privatizing and slashing Social Security and Medicare for our children and grandchildren. Disavow your vote to privatize and slash Medicare protections by turning it into a coupon program. Rethink your embrace of the House Republican budget which would cut Medicaid funding by 39% over the next ten years. It would pull needed protections away from seniors in nursing homes, children with disabilities and many others who deserve the respectful support of their communities. We, as a nation, are better than that. You, our Representative, should also seek to sustain, not diminish, the health and dignity of our most vulnerable citizens.

We are here today to tell our U.S. Senators, Mr. Shumer and Ms. Gilibrand, that we appreciate their support for these systems. We are pleased that you oppose cutting Social Security in the name of debt reduction. But, Senators Gilibrand and Shumer, please remind your colleagues, Democrats and Republicans alike, that they will not get a free pass from their constituents if they trade off pieces of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid as part of a “grand Bargain.” Let your colleagues know that you will not, and that they should not, use our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid as bargaining chips in a high stakes game of poker that will only benefit those who want to destroy these programs.

Our Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid systems work.

give expression to widely shared values – the responsibility to care for our parents, our children, our neighbors and ourselves; the responsibility to work hard and, in turn, to receive a fair reward; the dignity of every person. The values, these benefits we have earned for families, are worth preserving.

Working together we must and can tell Wall Street to keep their hands off these programs. Working together as we are today, pass these institutions forward. It was done for us, and now it’s our turn to do it for those who follow us.