

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

April 8, 2025

Mr. Leland C. Dudek  
Acting Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Acting Commissioner Dudek:

In 2023, the Social Security Administration (“SSA”) was responsible for paying benefits to more than 71 million Americans.<sup>1</sup> A February 2025 report by the SSA Office of Inspector General (SSA OIG) suggests that SSA is routinely plagued by improper overpayments.<sup>2</sup> As the chairmen of the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging (“Aging Committee”) and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations (“PSI”), we are committed to protecting and preserving the benefits of Social Security for all Americans both now and for generations to come. We write to request information on the total amount of fraudulent or wasteful spending by SSA, as well as what steps are being taken to address these issues.

According to the February 20, 2025, SSA OIG report, between 2020 and 2023, SSA improperly paid out more than \$32 billion in benefit overpayments.<sup>3</sup> The report states that overpayments occurred for a variety of reasons, ranging from beneficiaries’ failures to report information, such as incarceration, to benefits being paid out to deceased individuals.<sup>4</sup>

The OIG’s February 2025 report is but the latest in what appears to be a repeating pattern of SSA failing to prevent wasteful and fraudulent payments. In a July 2024 report, the SSA OIG determined that between 2015 and 2022 SSA made more than \$71 billion in improper payments.<sup>5</sup> The SSA OIG’s report also found that SSA was not taking the steps necessary to address and prevent this “longstanding challenge.”<sup>6</sup> Specifically, the SSA OIG noted that SSA needed to adopt better automation and data analytics tools, as well as access additional data sources, in order to prevent improper

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<sup>1</sup> Facts and Figures About Social Security, 2024, Social Security Administration, available at [https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast\\_facts/2024/fast\\_facts24.pdf](https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/chartbooks/fast_facts/2024/fast_facts24.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, Overpayments Assessed in Fiscal Years 2020- through 2023, Feb. 2025, available at <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/062405.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 2, 5.

<sup>5</sup> Social Security Administration, Office of the Inspector General, Preventing, Detecting, and Recovering Improper Payments, July 2024, available at <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/072401.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.* at 9.

payments.<sup>7</sup> Given the repeated issues around improper payments by SSA, it is unclear what, if any, steps have been taken to address the problem.

It is essential that the SSA take aggressive action to stop waste, fraud, and abuse, and make it a priority to clearly communicate the scope and success of this work to the hardworking American people who fund these programs and the vital benefits they provide to our elderly and disabled citizens.

To better understand what steps the SSA is taking to prevent overpayments and to recover those payments without overly burdening the most vulnerable in our society, we ask that you provide the following information:

1. Has SSA taken steps to address the challenges related to automation as identified in the July 2024 SSA OIG report?
  - a. If so, please provide a list of all new systems, contractors, or programs that SSA has implemented to address the challenges associated with automation.
2. Has SSA taken steps to address the challenges related to data analytics as identified in the July 2024 SSA OIG report?
  - a. If so, please provide a list of all new systems, contractors, or programs that SSA has implemented to address the data analytics challenge.
3. Has SSA taken steps to address the challenges related to accessing third-party data sources to prevent improper payments?
  - a. If so, please provide a list of all new systems, contractors, or programs that SSA has implemented to access third-party data sources to prevent overpayments.
4. Please identify all state, local, or federal databases that SSA uses to prevent improper payments to deceased, incarcerated, noncitizen, or otherwise ineligible individuals.
5. Please provide a breakdown of the number of improper payments made by SSA between fiscal years 2020 and present, including the number of improper payments for each fiscal year by category for the following categories:
  - a. Overpayment of benefits;
  - b. Payment of benefits to an otherwise ineligible beneficiary, including the reason the beneficiary was ineligible;
  - c. Payments to deceased beneficiaries; and
  - d. Improper payments as a result of SSA computation error.
6. From Fiscal Year 2020 to 2023, what is the dollar amount that the SSA expended to collect overpayments?

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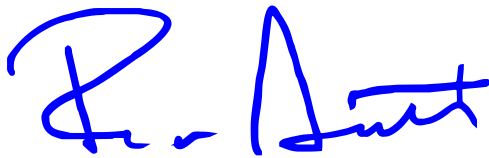
<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

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7. All plans, procedures, or memoranda regarding how SSA is addressing overpayments.
8. A list of any fraud, waste, or improper payments identified by any review or other work done by the Department of Government Efficiency ("DOGE") at SSA, including, but not limited to, fraudulently obtained Social Security numbers or any review of SSA information technology systems by DOGE.

We look forward to your prompt response and working together to protect and preserve the benefits of Social Security for generations to come.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott  
Chairman  
Senate Special Committee on Aging



Ron Johnson  
Chairman  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations