



# RETIRED STATE, COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF MASSACHUSETTS

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Honorable Jason Smith  
Chairman  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
1139 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Ron Estes  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Social Security

February 19, 2025

Dear Chairmen Smith and Estes:

We are writing to express our grave concerns regarding several important issues involving the Social Security Administration and respectfully call upon the House Ways and Means Committee to exercise its legal oversight authority. Specifically, we are concerned with the following: The timely and effective implementation of the Social Security Fairness Act; downsizing of the SSA workforce; ensuring data security and privacy protections for American citizens relative to DOGE.

As you may know, *Mass Retirees* has maintained a decades-long practice of working with Congress in a non-partisan manner to advocate on behalf of retired Massachusetts public employees. Most recently, this helped lead to the passage of the Social Security Fairness Act – a law that will greatly benefit nearly 3 million current retirees across the US.

Given the challenges of implementing the Social Security Fairness Act, coupled with our desire to see all retirees made whole as soon as possible, we appreciated the proactive stance taken by the Committee as represented by the January 10, 2025 letter to then Acting SSA Commissioner Carolyn W. Colvin. However, nearly six weeks after receiving your letter, SSA still has not shared a plan on how it intends to implement the Fairness Act.

Not only has SSA failed to notify the public of its plans, but it also appears that internal plans have yet to be shared with its own staff. This has led to great confusion amongst affected retirees, as well as an increasing sense of concern amongst our members that restoration of their benefits will be needlessly delayed, if not derailed.

That concern has been accelerated by the apparent focus of the Trump Administration and, specifically, DOGE, to downsize the SSA through attrition and the potential closing of field offices. We believe SSA is already understaffed and without sufficient resources to effectively implement the Social Security Fairness Act in a timely manner. We are deeply concerned that reductions to SSA's workforce will have a direct negative impact on our members.

*The Voice Of The Retired Public Employee*

We believe that SSA must take all necessary steps to retain its workforce and avoid the loss of experienced employees through attrition. To do otherwise will only further delay implementation of the Fairness Act, not to mention severely impair the ability of SSA to serve current and future retirees.

Our concerns have been further exacerbated by the sudden resignation of Acting SSA Commissioner Michelle King, reportedly in response to demands by Elon Musk and his DOGE Service to access sensitive government records maintained by SSA – records that include the personal and highly private information of tens of millions of Americans.

Given the challenges faced by SSA, the abrupt resignation of experienced senior staff is alarming. Deepening our concern are the circumstances surrounding Acting Commissioner King's resignation. Protecting the privacy and personal data of retirees is a major concern.

We are also concerned by vague references to potential fraud or the overpayment of Social Security benefits. It is incumbent upon those alleging malfeasance to produce factual evidence that substantiates such claims. As President Reagan famously said, "trust, but verify."

It is important to note that, prior to 2025, a factor in reported Social Security overpayments were undoubtedly the WEP and GPO laws. As you know, WEP/GPO were notoriously difficult to fairly implement and enforce due to processing, timing and simply lack of understanding of those complex laws. However, we have been made aware by many of our members over the past decades, who did receive overpayments and that have made significant repayments to the SSA due to these factors. We are not convinced these vague references to fraud and overpayments have identified these factors to this point.

Considering the litany of ongoing concerns involving SSA, as well as DOGE, we respectfully call upon Congress to fully exercise its Constitutional Authority as an equal branch of government by conducting oversight hearings aimed at answering the following:

1. Specifically, what is the SSA plan to fully implement the Social Security Fairness Act in an effective and timely manner?
  - a. What challenges currently exist that may impede implementation?
  - b. What, if any, additional resources are needed or required?
2. What, if any, plans now exist to reduce the size of the SSA workforce?
  - a. Which departments are impacted?
  - b. Are the workforce reductions targeted or open ended?
  - c. What might the impact of field office closures be on SSA's mission?
  - d. What would the impact be on implementation of Social Security Fairness Act?
  - e. What would the impact be on SSA's mission, as mandated by Congress?
3. Why has the DOGE Service requested access to the personal data of Social Security applicants and beneficiaries?
  - a. In terms of SSA, what is the focus of DOGE?
  - b. Specifically, which individuals have access to private data housed SSA?
    - i. Have proper background and/or security checks been conducted on these individuals?
    - ii. What is the experience and qualifications of the individuals performing this work?
  - c. How is private SSA data being accessed?

- i. Is the private SSA data being copied or backed up to a system outside of SSA? If yes, then why? What is the intended purpose?
- ii. What steps are being taken to protect the personal privacy and security of Americans?

Further, we strongly believe that the American people deserve to know who is accessing their private information and why. Any alleged fraud or malfeasance reported by DOGE must be properly documented and presented for verification. The lack of transparency is of great concern and leads us to question the true intent of DOGE's work.

Action taken by Congress to promptly address these questions and concerns will help to ease the fears of retirees, while also ensuring that Congress maintains its proper oversight authority. Public hearings will also ensure transparency.

We implore you to fulfill your Constitutional responsibility and act without delay – before irreversible and needless harm is done.

Finally, our members need and deserve answers.

Again, we have long enjoyed a close and collaborative relationship with the Committee and your staff. We look forward to continuing to work together on all issues of mutual concern.

Most sincerely,



Frank Valeri  
President  
*Mass Retirees Association*



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Chief Executive Officer

CC: Honorable Richard Neal  
Honorable John Larson  
Shaun Freiman, Chief Counsel, Social Security, Republican/Deputy General Counsel  
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