

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2025

Frank Bisignano
Social Security Commissioner Nominee-Designate
Fiserv
7905 Malcolm Rd
Clinton, MD 20735

Dear Mr. Bisignano:

We write regarding our concerns about the impact of the Trump Administration’s efforts to fire thousands of workers that Americans rely on to process and disburse their Social Security checks. President Trump promised that his administration “won’t touch” Americans’ hard-earned Social Security benefits, but now Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) are planning regional office closures and mass layoffs at Social Security Administration (SSA) facilities.¹ The Acting SSA Administrator has admitted that DOGE could “break things,”² raising concerns about an interruption of benefits and threatening the finances of millions of Americans.³ As President Trump’s nominee for SSA Commissioner, you will be responsible if the Trump Administration’s attacks on the program result in failures or delays in getting Americans their Social Security checks – in other words, a backdoor cut to benefits.

Last week, SSA announced plans to cut over 7,000 employees and close regional offices.⁴ This would represent a reduction in workforce of over 10 percent and will have devastating impacts on the program: Social Security offices nationwide receive about 170,000 in-person visits and 250,000 calls each day from Americans who need help with their benefits.⁵ This includes seniors who rely on their Social Security check – money they earned through a lifetime of hard work – and millions of disabled individuals and their parents who receive Social Security disability payments.⁶ These cuts will hurt all Americans that receive Social Security checks. Indeed, they

¹ Pennsylvania Independent, “Trump breaks promise not to cut Social Security”, Josh Israel, March 4, 2025, <https://pennsylvaniaindependent.com/politics/trump-breaks-promise-cut-social-security-administration-funding-closures/>.

² CNN, “‘A disruptive effect’: How slashing staff at the Social Security Administration is sparking fears the system could collapse,” Tami Luhby and Jeremy Herb, March 8, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/03/08/politics/social-security-administration-staff-cuts/index.html>.

³ Washington Post, “DOGE is driving Social Security cuts and will make mistakes, acting head says privately,” Lisa Rein, Jeff Stein and Hannah Natanson, March 6, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/03/06/doge-is-driving-social-security-cuts-will-make-mistakes-acting-head-says-privately/>.

⁴ Pennsylvania Independent, “Trump breaks promise not to cut Social Security” Josh Israel, March 4, 2025, <https://pennsylvaniaindependent.com/politics/trump-breaks-promise-cut-social-security-administration-funding-closures/>.

⁵ Social Security Administration, Agency Plans and Reports, <https://trumpadministration.archives.performance.gov/SSA/#:~:text=We%20administer%20our%20programs%20and%20questions%2C%20or%20update%20their%20information.>

⁶ Social Security Administration, Annual Statistical Report on the Social Security Disability Insurance Program,

already have: SSA workers have reported that the wait times for basic services have dramatically increased, sometimes by hours.⁷

And these announced cuts appear to be just the beginning. Public reports indicate that SSA may further reduce its workforce to just 50 percent of its current size.⁸ If allowed to continue, the results will be devastating. In the 1980s, substantially smaller cuts to the Social Security workforce resulted in 80,000 eligible Americans failing to receive their benefits.⁹ These new cuts could result in millions of Americans being cheated out of the money they earned throughout their careers, while limiting SSA’s ability to catch and correct payment errors. The net result could be a disaster: more overpayments and waste in the system, at the same time that Americans who have earned their Social Security benefits are unable to receive them.

We have already asked Acting Commissioner Dudek to explain how the SSA will continue to provide services in light of these cuts. Mr. Dudek – who himself was appointed for his willingness to cooperate with DOGE’s efforts to dismantle SSA – has admitted that the system is under threat. He has reportedly informed staff that DOGE “outsiders who are unfamiliar with nuances of SSA programs” are currently making all the decisions – and confirmed the fears that “they will make mistakes.”¹⁰ But he has refused to answer our questions. Meanwhile, President Trump and Elon Musk – who calls Social Security a “Ponzi scheme” – continue the efforts to dismantle the program.¹¹

You are the nominee to be the next SSA Commissioner, and if confirmed, will have to implement and face the consequences of these extraordinary cuts to Social Security program staff. To better understand how you would address the threats from these cuts, we request that you provide answers to the following questions by March 20, 2025:

1. If confirmed, will you take direction from Mr. Musk or DOGE officials?
 - a. Will you deny Mr. Musk or other DOGE officials access to sensitive Social Security Administration payments systems?
 - b. Will you deny Mr. Musk and other DOGE employees access to individuals’ sensitive personal health and financial information?
 - c. Will you continue to implement DOGE’s directive to reduce the workforce by 50 percent?
 - d. Would you implement a DOGE directive to stop sending benefits to any individuals or group of individuals?

2023, https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/di_asr/2023/di_asr23.pdf.

⁷ Washington Post, “DOGE is driving Social Security cuts and will make mistakes, acting head says privately,” Lisa Rein, Jeff Stein and Hannah Natanson, March 6, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/03/06/doge-is-driving-social-security-cuts-will-make-mistakes-acting-head-says-privately/>.

⁸ AP News, “Social Security Administration could cut up to 50% of its workforce,” Fatima Hussein, February 27, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/social-security-layoffs-doge-musk-trump-93efbed33957af5ec8ac37744d0592de>.

⁹ Prospect, “How Social Security Administration Cuts Affect You,” David Dayen, March 6, 2025 <https://prospect.org/health/2025-03-06-how-social-security-administration-cuts-affect-you/>.

¹⁰ Washington Post, “DOGE is driving Social Security cuts and will make mistakes, acting head says privately,” Lisa Rein, Jeff Stein and Hannah Natanson, March 6, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/03/06/doge-is-driving-social-security-cuts-will-make-mistakes-acting-head-says-privately/>.

¹¹ New York Times, “With Musk Targeting Social Security, Democrats See a Political Opportunity.

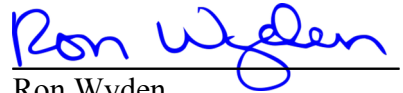
Carl Hulse, March 5, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/05/us/politics/musk-social-security-democrats.html>.

2. Mr. Musk has called Social Security a “Ponzi scheme.” Do you agree with this assessment?
3. If confirmed, how will you address the disruptions to SSA customer service and long wait times that layoffs have already caused?
4. If confirmed, do you plan to continue layoffs or reductions in force at SSA?
 - a. If so, please describe your plans.
 - b. If so, please describe how you will ensure that reductions in workforce don’t result in missed payments and increased wait times?
5. If confirmed, will you close SSA field offices?
 - a. How will you determine which offices to close?
6. Before closing any Social Security field offices, will you commit to conducting the below analysis?
 - a. Determining how long it currently takes to reach a customer service representative at the office, both by phone and in person.
 - b. Determining the office’s average wait time for new applicants and for adjudication of appeals.
 - c. Identifying the next closest office.
 - d. Conferring with the representative of the district in which the office is located.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance