

February 3, 2012

House Ways and Means Committee  
Subcommittee on Social Security  
B 317 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**Subject: OPPOSE HR 3475, S 1534, HR 3482, AND HR 3215**

Although the hearing on this matter was scheduled for yesterday, February 2, I still wish to submit these comments for the record.

I support Congress's intent to protect Americans from improper usage of our personal information, and to help protect us from identity theft. However, I oppose restriction of access to public records rarely related to identity theft.

Currently, four bills are pending in the Congress that would eliminate or curtail access to the Social Security Death Index on the Internet:

**HR 3475, *Keeping IDs Safe Act of 2011***

If enacted, this bill effectively ends public access to the SSDI/Death Master File.

**S 1534, Identity Theft and Tax Fraud Prevention Act**

**HR 3482, To prevent identity theft and tax crimes**

**HR 3215, To prevent identity theft and tax fraud**

If enacted, these bills prohibit disclosure of a deceased's Social Security Number in calendar year of death and calendar year following death.

I oppose these bills for the following reasons:

Access to the SSDI/Death Master File:

1. Does not lead to a significant proportion of identity theft.  
The vast majority of identity theft occurs, instead, from computer security breaches of institutions and enterprises holding records of *living* individuals.
2. Helps to *prevent* identity fraud.  
Access allows verification of a person's death and thereby helps to prevent fraud (per the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) website).
3. Is vitally important to the work of genealogists such as myself.  
We rely heavily on these records when doing US research both in and outside the United States. Their importance to our research cannot be overestimated.

For these reasons, I oppose HR 3475, S 1534, HR 3482, and HR 3215.

Respectfully,

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