



WAYS AND MEANS

CHAIRMAN KEVIN BRADY

SOCIAL SECURITY MUST AVERT IDENTITY LOSS (SOCIAL SECURITY MAIL) ACT OF 2016 (H.R. 5320)

Introduced by Social Security Subcommittee Chairman Sam Johnson (R-TX) and Rep. Jim Renacci (R-OH), the Social Security MAIL Act (H.R. 5320) requires the Social Security Administration (SSA) to remove Social Security Numbers (SSNs) from mailings when their use is unnecessary, and to justify its continued use of SSNs on mailings where the inclusion of a SSN is necessary (such as when mailing a Social Security Card).

BACKGROUND

- The Federal Trade Commission, the lead Federal agency on identity theft, reported almost half a million complaints of identity theft in 2015, an increase of more than 150,000 from 2014.¹
- Last year, the SSA sent about 233 million documents that contain full SSNs² on at least 579 different notices.
- The SSA Inspector General recently reported that as many as 51% of the addresses the SSA uses for some of its mailings have been inaccurate.³
- While the SSA has taken steps to improve the accuracy of its address records, the danger of a full SSN being mailed to the wrong individual remains.
- The SSA has claimed that it is committed to removing SSNs from its mailings whenever possible, but has failed to provide a timeline for when it will complete SSN removal.

SOCIAL SECURITY MAIL ACT

The Social Security MAIL Act will ensure that the SSA follows through on its commitment by:

- Requiring the SSA to remove the SSN from all unnecessary mailings as soon as practicable; and,
- Requiring the SSA to provide bi-annual reports to Congress on the progress of this removal.

These bi-annual reports will allow Congress to track the SSA's progress by requiring the SSA to include which mailings continue to contain a full SSN, and provide either the date the SSN is scheduled to be removed from that mailing, or if the SSA determines that the SSN is necessary, a justification for the determination.

¹ [*Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book for January – December 2015*](#), Federal Trade Commission, 79 (February 2016).

² [*Social Security Administration Correspondence Containing Full Social Security Numbers*](#), Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, 2 (April 27, 2016).

³ *Id.*, at 8.