

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Social Security
Statement for the Record
Field Hearing on Social Security Numbers and Child Identity Theft
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I would like to thank Congressman Johnson and the members of the Subcommittee for the invitation to tell my family's story concerning identity theft.

Two year ago when my step-daughter was 17 years old, she applied for a lifeguard job in Tyler, Texas with Green Acres Baptist Church summer camp at Lake Tyler. In order to obtain the job, the church required a simple background check on all employees by using Social Security numbers which were run through the "Safe Churches Project of Safe Advantage Services" a member of the First American Family of Companies. My daughter submitted her SSN to the church and they ran the background check.

When they sent us the results of that check we were shocked to find that her Social Security number was being used by six to seven other people in California, Nevada and Texas. In one case, two people living in Houston at the same address were using her number. This Social Security number was assigned to her when she was born on February 12, 1993 in Houston, TX and since she was a minor, the need to check her identity had never come up.

Upon learning of this, my wife contacted the local Social Security office in Collin County, Texas and was informed that there was very little they could do to help us. I contacted a friend in Tyler, Texas who had retired from the FBI a few years back and he told us that there was very little that the federal government could or would do to help and that the only recourse we had was to contact the various credit rating agencies in the U.S. and to send letters to local police and sheriff's office in the cities where these individuals lived. We contacted the credit rating agencies, but since she was under the age of 18, they didn't even have her listed and offered no help whatsoever. At this time we felt like there was no help and any attempts to monitor or control this was useless without spending a large amount of time and money.

It is my opinion that the people using her Social Security number purchased the number and identity from someone else and that perhaps some of these people are in the United States illegally. Identity theft is a crime and if you are selling or buying Social Security numbers, you are committing a crime. This is a problem that seems to be growing daily and I am concerned that government is not making fighting identity theft a top priority.

Chairman Johnson, I have no idea if this will have any definitive impact on my daughter but believe that one day it will be a problem. In the meantime, there are at least six other people who are illegally using her Social Security number to obtain jobs, credit, loans and possibly claiming some type of benefit under Social Security.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion I do not believe that it should be the sole responsibility of the individual who is a victim of identity theft to attempt to correct these problems stemming from identity theft.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before this Subcommittee.