

U.S House of Representatives

Washington, DC

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RE: SSDI = Social Security Death Index -- Keep it Public

Dear Congressional Rep.:

FEB, 2012

This is to urge you **Not** to pass HR 3475, which would close public access to the SSDI, which is a resource of great value in several areas. I believe you have reports from RPAC - the Records Preservation & Access Committee. This details the public use of the SSDI, which is a **Pro-Security** asset in preventing identity theft. Someone using the SS # of a dead person - unless working on probate - may be up to no good. Businesses and law enforcement agencies can readily use the SSDI in checking on such cases.

I am an amateur genealogist - or family historian - with 15 years of experience, and a member of the Genealogical Society of South Brevard since 2000. This society, with a website at gssb.net, is located in Melbourne, FLA.

Accredited professional genealogists use the SSDI for important purposes. These include assisting coroners in finding kin of deceased persons, and helping families with medical history and DNA investigations - **which can Help Save Lives**. They also help families of missing/deceased military members. Please contact RPAC for more info. if needed - though I hope you already have that.

My own use of the SSDI over the years illustrates another important use:

The SSDI fosters Family Values at their best.

Using the "final locations" on the SSDI, I have been able to order many obituaries, which usually list survivors, whom I can then contact with a friendly letter and one or more pictures of common kin. Those survivors are free to respond, or not -- most do respond and are glad to hear from me. This has led to ongoing correspondence, sharing of photos and other information, and even in-person visits and gatherings. Following are three notable examples of that.

Via the SSDI, we contacted a CT family. They visited NY, where we were able to take 3 cousins to the Brooklyn home where their father lived as a young man--a very moving experience for them. This family had been looking for us. They were delighted to hear from us, and we have been in touch ever since with these wonderful people.

This family had 6 branches. Because of SSDI access, I was able to contact surviving members of the other 5 branches and send them prints of this grand classic portrait. **All** were most grateful.

The lady at front right is a living 1st cousin of my father Adrian Whelan (1912-1957), contacted via the SSDI. We have met in person and exchanged many pictures and stories for several years now.

These are outstanding examples of the value of the **Public SSDI** for family history and Family Values. For this - and the other positive uses of the SSDI - I urge you to keep this index public.

Sincerely, Arthur Whelan