

Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council, Inc.  
P. O. Box 4273  
Hartford, Connecticut 06147-4273  
08 February 2012

Re: Hearing on Social Security Death Records

To Members of the Subcommittee:

We are opposed to the closing of the Social Security Master Death File. It was created to prevent the types of misuse that speakers at your hearing described.

Financial institutions, the Internal Revenue Service and other entities that use the Social Security number for identification need to improve their procedures for detecting fraudulent use of the numbers. The Social Security Administration needs to create a system for ensuring that individuals are actually deceased before they are listed in the Master Death File. We feel that these issues can be resolved with a minimum of effort. Closing the File to the public will not resolve these issues.

The Social Security Master Death File is an important tool in our work. Closing the database will have a negative effect on our ability to conduct our businesses, and will cause us economic hardship. A short and incomplete list of how we use this database includes

- identifying lawful heirs in probate cases
- identifying relatives of military personnel who have been missing-in-action and whose remains have been found
- identifying relatives of people who need to understand the genetic basis of their medical conditions

There are compromises that can be considered as alternatives to closing the Social Security Master Death File to the public. These could include

- not listing deceased children until the date of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday
- not listing deceased individuals for one year after their death
- listing individuals immediately but not listing their Social Security numbers for one year

Our position was not represented in the testimony of invited speakers at the hearing on this topic. We ask that you consider our position and recognize the importance of this database to the American people and to the people who use the Master Death File for legitimate business purposes.

Sincerely yours,  
Nora Galvin, President  
representing the 56 members of the  
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