

Dear Chairman Johnson and Members of the Committee:

RE:

- HR 3475, Keeping IDs Safe Act of 2011
- S 1534, the Identity Theft and Tax Fraud Prevention Act
- HR 3482 To prevent identity theft and tax crimes.
- HR 3215 To prevent identity theft and tax

I am writing to urge that you consider the economic and other ramifications that these proposals will have upon commerce, the legal community, and governmental activities.

Public access to the **Death Master File, Social Security Death Index (SSDI)** is an irreplaceable resource used across the commercial spectrum as well as by attorneys, bank and trust companies, title companies, oil and gas companies, medical researchers, forensic genealogists, and others. Human resource departments large and small use the SSDI as part of their compliance with federal hiring guidelines. A few additional examples are below.

The Department of Defense is mandated by Congress to repatriate the remains of our unaccounted-for service personnel. The vast majority of American losses date from World War II. Research for family members of servicemen in World War II and the Korean conflict is especially dependent upon access to SSDI. Many servicemen from this time period were born prior to state vital records, as certainly were their parents. With the mass migrations during the 1930s, 1940s, and to some extent the 1950s, SSDI is very often the only resource that military contract genealogists have to trace relatives whose genealogy is vital to identifying family members eligible to submit DNA Family Reference Samples. These facts also apply to those organizations who work with coroners to find the families of unclaimed service personnel and other deceased persons

The SSDI is a vital tool among legal professionals, especially in probate and other cases which involve proving heirship. In states with closed death records and no published death indexes, the SSDI may be the only resource for tracing and proving heirship. In closed records states, the SSDI record may be the only source available that meets Rules of Evidence for documenting deaths to the satisfaction of the court. Title companies, oil/gas and mineral companies use the SSDI for the same reasons. When oil companies cannot trace and identify lineages from original mineral owners, the unknown heirs cannot be identified. In these cases, courts often issue orders allowing drilling and production. Heirs to the mineral rights are in effect cheated out of their economic benefit.

I am a certified genealogist accredited by the Board for the Certification of Genealogists and I work as a contract genealogist in the area of forensic genealogy where it is vital to have access to the Death Master File/Social Security Death Index in order to trace the living heirs of soldiers missing from WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Removal of access to this source will greatly impact my ability to render this service for our missing soldiers.

This is just a small example of how many in the commercial, business, legal and governmental communities rely upon the irreplaceable SSDI. Please consider measures that will help the SSDI meet the potential for which it was designed - to *prevent* identity theft. Loss of public access to this irreplaceable resource will have NEGATIVE financial, legal, and other impacts.

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