

Friday, February 03, 2012

House Ways and Means Committee
Subcommittee on Social Security
B 317 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: OPPOSE HR 3475, S 1534, HR 3482, AND HR 3215

Genealogists support Congress's intent to protect Americans from improper usage of their personal information, and to protect them from identity theft. However, genealogists DO NOT support restricting access to public records that have very little to do with identity theft.

Currently, four bills are pending in the US Congress that would eliminate or curtail access to the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) on the Internet. I oppose all of these bills, which are:

- HR 3475, *Keeping IDs Safe Act of 2011* <http://tinyurl.com/6uwu4aw>
(If enacted, this bill would effectively end public access to the death file)
- S 1534, the Identity Theft and Tax Fraud Prevention Act <http://tinyurl.com/75de8o9>
(If enacted, this bill prohibits disclosure of the deceased's SSN in calendar year of death and calendar year following death)
- HR 3482, To prevent identity theft and tax crimes. <http://tinyurl.com/83p4b4p>
(If enacted, this bill prohibits disclosure of the deceased's SSN in calendar year of death and calendar year following death)
- HR 3215, To prevent identity theft and tax fraud <http://tinyurl.com/7fgsd5s>
(If enacted, this bill prohibits disclosure of the deceased's SSN in calendar year of death and calendar year following death)

Rarely has it been documented that an individual's identity is violated by access to SSDI; rather, the violations occur due to computer breaches from government and private enterprises. In fact, SSDI is actually a deterrent to identity theft. As posted on the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) website (<http://tinyurl.com/yb6e49e>), it states, that the Death Master File (SSDI is the commercial name of this list) prevents identity fraud, as it verifies a person's death. The SSDI is used by credit reporting agencies, merchants, private investigators looking for missing heirs in probates, media reporters, university researchers, and others.

Genealogists doing US research located both in and outside the United States rely heavily on the SSDI. The Death Master File is a computer database file that has been made available by the United States Social Security Administration since 1980.

I oppose HR 3475, S 1534, HR 3482, and HR 3215.

Thank you,

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