

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 9, 2025

The Honorable Frank Bisignano
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Bisignano:

We write with concerns regarding recent reports that the Social Security Administration is reorganizing its field office operations, and has established a goal of cutting the number of field office visits in half—amounting to 15 million fewer visits annually.¹ Given that beneficiaries are already waiting months for field office appointments, and the agency has not shared with Congress or the public on how it plans to achieve this goal, we are concerned that these efforts are in fact part of a plan to “quietly kill[] field offices,” implementing a back-door cut in benefits by making it harder for Americans to access the Social Security customer services they need.²

The Trump Administration has worked to cut and undermine the Social Security Administration (SSA) at every turn. You have enacted changes that have impeded on beneficiaries’ ability to access their earned benefits—slashing the SSA’s workforce by around 7,000, potentially closing regional offices, and implementing burdensome in-person and bug-prone identification processes that make it harder for beneficiaries to get their benefits.³ In total, these changes will force millions more to visit field offices each year, as reported by the agency’s internal estimates.⁴ But instead of staffing up to meet these needs, SSA field office capacity declined dramatically. According to a now-deleted agency SSA web page, forty field offices had lost more than a quarter of their staff as of April 2025—with a dozen having lost more than a third.⁵ Once you were confirmed, you further decimated the field office workforce by reassigning 2,000 front office workers to the SSA’s AI-driven national 1-800 number, diverting the agency’s already

¹ NextGov/FCW, “Social Security wants about 15 million fewer visits in its field offices,” Natalie Alms, December 1, 2025, <https://www.nextgov.com/digital-government/2025/12/social-security-wants-about-15-million-fewer-visits-its-field-offices/409850/>.

² *Id.*; USA Today, “Social Security wait times were already long under Biden. They’re even longer under Trump.,” Sarah D. Wire, updated May 9, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/05/06/social-security-wait-times-longer/83385829007/>.

³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Nearly 2 Million More People Will Need to Visit Social Security Offices Under Revised Policy,” Kathleen Romig, May 2, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/nearly-2-million-more-people-will-need-to-visit-social-security-offices-under-revised-policy>; Urban Institute, “Social Security Office Closures Will Hurt Rural and Tribal Communities,” Barbara Butrica and Jonathan Schwabish, March 24, 2025, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/social-security-office-closures-will-hurt-rural-and-tribal-communities>.

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Washington Post, “Social Security pulls field office staff to answer overwhelmed phone line,” Meryl Kornfield and Hannah Natanson, July 10, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/07/10/social-security-phone-service-wait-times/>.

limited staff away from serving field office visitors and processing claims.⁶ Beneficiaries now report that they are waiting for hours to talk to someone face-to-face—only to be told they will need to call to schedule an appointment—with long wait lists.⁷

Now, the SSA has reportedly announced that it intends to cut field office visits in half as part of its broader plan to restructure its field office operations.⁸ Providing improved phone and online services would be a significant improvement for beneficiaries—but you appear to be attempting to do that at the expense of providing quality in-person service, which will only harm Social Security beneficiaries, especially those living in rural communities.⁹ You have not provided any information as to how you plan to reduce the number of field office visits, whether all beneficiaries will continue to be eligible for in-person assistance, or whether SSA will limit the number of available appointments. Similar to SSA’s recent deployment of the AI chatbot on the national 1-800 number or reassignment of field office staff, SSA deployed this initiative with virtually no input from Congress, advocacy groups, or members of the public.¹⁰ We are concerned that your plan is to force beneficiaries onto SSA’s bug-prone website or push them into customer service phone tree “doom-loops”—which will almost certainly result in delayed or missed benefits for some individuals. Once again, you seem to have adopted a slash-first, think-later approach to “modernizing” SSA, and beneficiaries will pay the price.

Given these concerns, and to ensure that Social Security recipients retain access to the benefits they have earned, we ask that you provide additional information and respond to the following questions by January 6, 2026.

- (1) Are reports that you intend to reduce the number of field office visits by 15 million accurate?
 - (a) If so, what is the specific plan to do so?
 - (b) When will these plans be put in place?
 - (c) Will you cut the number of available appointments at field offices?
 - (d) How will SSA provide services to beneficiaries that would otherwise go to field offices?

⁶ Government Executive, “SSA touts service improvements, but reassignments tell a different story,” Erich Wagner, July 9, 2025, <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2025/07/ssa-touts-service-improvements-reassignments-tell-different-story/406618/>; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Reassignment Won’t Fix the Largest-Ever Social Security Staffing Cut,” Kathleen Romig and Devin O’Connor, June 23, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/reassignment-wont-fix-the-largest-ever-social-security-staffing-cut>.

⁷ Washington Post, “Callers to Social Security wait for hours to get help. Hear their ordeals,” Meryl Kornfield and Hannah Natanson, October 28, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/interactive/2025/social-security-wait-hold-callback/>; USA Today, “Social Security wait times were already long under Biden. They’re even longer under Trump,” Sarah D. Wire, updated May 9, 2025, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/05/06/social-security-wait-times-longer/83385829007/>.


⁸ NextGov/FCW, “Social Security wants about 15 million fewer visits in its field offices,” Natalie Alms, December 1, 2025, <https://www.nextgov.com/digital-government/2025/12/social-security-wants-about-15-million-fewer-visits-its-field-offices/409850/>.

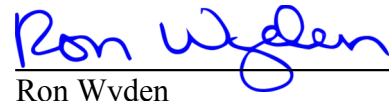
⁹ Urban Institute, “Social Security Office Closures Will Hurt Rural and Tribal Communities,” Barbara Butrica and Jonathan Schwabish, March 24, 2025, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/social-security-office-closures-will-hurt-rural-and-tribal-communities>.


¹⁰ U.S. Senate Finance Committee, “Wyden, Warren, Gillibrand, and Sanders Demand Answers on Reckless Rollout of AI Tools at Social Security,” July 1, 2025, <https://www.finance.senate.gov/ranking-members-news/wyden-warren-gillibrand-and-sanders-demand-answers-on-reckless-rollout-of-ai-tools-at-social-security>.


- (e) How will SSA ensure that these beneficiaries are able to get the same quality of service that they would have received in field offices?
- (f) How will SSA account for the needs of beneficiaries that are unable to address problems without a field office visit?
- (2) What specific services will SSA deploy for online users?
 - (a) Please provide the timeline for testing and deployment of each service.
- (3) What new services will SSA deploy for individuals calling the National 1-800 Number?
 - (a) Please provide the timeline for testing and deployment of each service.
- (4) Under the proposed change, will beneficiaries be able to get assistance in field offices without an appointment?
 - (a) If so, under what circumstances?
 - (b) What is the targeted waiting time for field office visits—both for scheduled appointments and walk-ins—under your new proposal?
- (5) What is the current average wait time to schedule a field office appointment?
- (6) If in-person wait times increase under your new plan, will you add new appointment slots?

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance


Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Special
Committee on Aging


Bernard Sanders
United States Senator