

SOCIAL SECURITY WAR ROOM

**SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY:
HOW THE SOCIAL SECURITY
WAR ROOM HAS FOUGHT
& WON FOR AMERICANS
IN ITS FIRST YEAR**

Saving Social Security: How the Social Security War Room Has Fought and Won for Americans in its First Year

Despite his campaign promises to “not touch” Social Security, Donald Trump has taken a wrecking ball to the Social Security Administration (SSA), jeopardizing Americans’ access to their hard-earned benefits. Since Day One of his Administration, President Trump and his SSA Commissioner, Frank Bisignano, have slashed thousands of employees and upended critical services at field offices and on the agency’s customer service phone line.¹ These changes amount to back-door program cuts, making it harder for seniors to claim their benefits, solve problems, or just get answers to their basic questions.

To fight back against the Trump Administration’s efforts to undermine Social Security, we launched the Social Security War Room a year ago to fight for seniors, draw attention to the customer service chaos President Trump and Commissioner Bisignano have caused at SSA, and counter their relentless attacks on the agency and Americans’ benefits.² As President Trump and Commissioner Bisignano continue to level their attacks, the Social Security War Room will continue to fight to uphold Social Security’s promise to the American people.

The Trump Administration Has Degraded SSA

Immediately after taking office, Donald Trump wasted no time in targeting Social Security, handing the agency over to Elon Musk – a man who has called Social Security a “Ponzi scheme” – and his bogus Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).³ DOGE cut around 7,500 employees from the agency,⁴ and the results of these cuts have been catastrophic – driving up wait times for phone services and in-person field office appointments.⁵ Some rural field offices have reportedly been left with such limited capacity that are effectively closed⁶ – unable to carry out the in-person services millions of older Americans and people with disabilities rely on. At the same time it was gutting field offices, the SSA implemented burdensome new administrative

¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Trump Administration Personnel Policies Harming Social Security Customer Service, Risk Lasting Damage,” Kathleen Romig and Devin O’Connor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/trump-administration-personnel-policies-harming-social-security-customer>.

² Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Senate Democrats Launch Social Security War Room to Fight Back Against Trump Admin Attacks,” press release, April 1, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/senate-democrats-launch-social-security-war-room-to-fight-back-against-trump-admin-attacks>.

³ Brookings Institute, “Why Social Security disinformation is dangerous,” Darrell M. West, March 18, 2025, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-social-security-disinformation-is-dangerous>.

⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Trump Administration Personnel Policies Harming Social Security Customer Service, Risk Lasting Damage,” Kathleen Romig and Devin O’Connor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/trump-administration-personnel-policies-harming-social-security-customer>.

⁵ 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-securitywait-hold-callback>.

⁶ Center for American Progress, “The Social Security Administration Is Bleeding Staff,” Molly Weston Williamson, January 30, 2026, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-social-security-administration-is-bleeding-staff>; Government Executive, “SSA union fears field offices could shutter under new building occupancy law,” Erich Wagner, April 10, 2026, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2026/04/ssa-union-fears-field-offices-could-shutter-under-new-building-occupancy-law/412784>.

requirements that forced beneficiaries to go to field offices for basic functions that had previously been available over the phone.⁷

Instead of working to address this customer service crisis, DOGE was busy pilfering SSA beneficiaries' sensitive and personal information – potentially illegally – either walking away with millions of beneficiaries' records on a thumb drive or using it to improperly label immigrants as “dead” in a coordinated effort to strip them of their livelihoods and force self-deportations.⁸

The man the Trump administration appointed to carry on these attacks, Commissioner Frank Bisignano, has attempted to paper over the chaos he has created at the agency – rather than fix customer service problems – cherry-picking metrics, soliciting federal contracts to deploy self-service kiosks, and shifting thousands of employees away from their jobs processing benefits and managing field offices to answering the agency's embattled 1-800 number⁹ – effectively “re-arranging deck chairs on the Titanic.”¹⁰ Under his leadership, the agency also came close to announcing a rule that would make it harder for disabled Americans to get their Social Security disability benefits, backing off only after public pressure.¹¹ Commissioner Bisignano has even floated the idea of raising the Social Security retirement age,¹² echoing similar calls from other top administration officials like Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Mehmet Oz who have advocated for privatizing Social Security or have encouraged older Americans to work longer to delay their retirement.¹³

⁷ 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-peoplewill-need-to-visit-social-security-offices-under-revised-policy>.

⁸ Letter from Senators Ron Wyden, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders, et al., to SSA Commissioner Leland Dudek, April 30, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_ssa.pdf; Washington Post, “Whistleblower claims ex-DOGE member says he took Social Security data to new job,” Meryl Kornfield, Elizabeth Dvoskin, and Lisa Rein, March 10, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/03/10/social-security-data-breach-doge-2/>.

⁹ Letter from Senators Elizabeth Warren, Ron Wyden, Kirsten Gillibrand, et al., to SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano, March 15, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_warren_senators_to_social_security_admin_on_new_staff_reassignments.pdf.

¹⁰ National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, “‘Re-Arranging Deck Chairs at Social Security’: Bisignano’s Fake Fix for Staffing Crisis,” March 17, 2026, <https://www.ncpssm.org/entitledtoknow/re-arranging-deck-chairs-at-social-security-bisignanos-fake-fix-for-staffing-crisis>.

¹¹ The Washington Post, “Social Security scraps plan to limit disability benefits after uproar,” Lisa Rein and Meryl Kornfield, November 19, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/11/19/social-security-disability-benefits-age>.

¹² Letter from Senators Elizabeth Warren, Kirsten Gillibrand, Chris Van Hollen, et al., to SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano, September 30, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_letter_to_president_trump_on_raising_the_retirement_age_9_30_25.pdf.

¹³ Politico, “Bessent hails new ‘Trump accounts’ as ‘backdoor for privatizing Social Security,’” Michael Stratford, July 30, 2025, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/07/30/bessent-trump-accounts-backdoor-privatize-social-security-00484859>; Washington Post, “Why Dr. Oz wants you to retire later,” February 8, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2026/02/08/dr-mehmet-oz-delay-retirement>.

Other Threats to Social Security Benefits

Despite President Trump’s promises, the Administration continues to threaten Americans’ rights to their basic Social Security benefits. For example, the Trump administration and Congressional Republicans’ disastrous *One Big Beautiful Bill Act* (OBBBA) has accelerated the insolvency of the Social Security trust fund, sending Americans even closer to an automatic benefits cut.¹⁴

Key Republican policymakers – including the authors of Project 2025 – have supported raising the retirement age, forcing seniors to work longer and longer to earn their benefits.¹⁵

The Administration also considered imposing new rules that would effectively cut eligibility for Social Security Disability Benefits.¹⁶ And in September 2025, Commissioner Bisignano pointedly refused to rule out increasing the retirement age, stating during a Fox News interview that “everything’s being considered and will be considered.”¹⁷ He quickly walked back these statements – but questions remain about whether the Trump Administration will seek to cut benefits.

The Social Security War Room Has Fought Back and Won

For the past year, the Social Security War Room has fought to protect American’s benefits and to hold the Trump administration accountable for threatening Social Security’s promise. The Trump Administration’s threats to the program continue – but Democratic members of Congress in the War Room have succeeded in stopping many harmful policies in their tracks.

- 1. Sounding the Alarm through Rigorous Oversight:** Since its launch, the Social Security War Room has exposed the Trump Administration’s attacks on Social Security and initiated nearly two dozen investigations and reports – some of which forced the Administration to reverse course on harmful policies. For example, when internal documents showed that President Trump and Elon Musk were lying about Social Security fraud – and using it as an excuse to slow down claims processing by almost 25 percent – the War Room sounded the alarm and they backtracked. When Americans reported waiting hours on the phone to talk to a SSA representative while the agency refused honesty and transparency on wait times – Democrats conducted an investigation that revealed the truth about how long Americans were waiting on the phone for help.¹⁸ They found the actual average wait time was over ten times higher than what the SSA claimed

¹⁴ Tax Policy Center, “How The 2025 Budget Act Accelerates Social Security’s Insolvency,” Howard Gleckman, August 12, 2025, <https://taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/how-2025-budget-act-accelerates-social-securitys-insolvency>.

¹⁵ Center for American Progress, “Raising the Retirement Age for Social Security Would Cut Benefits by Thousands of Dollars Each Year,” Kyle Ross, July 31, 2024, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/raising-the-retirement-age-for-social-security-would-cut-benefits-by-thousands-of-dollars-each-year/>.

¹⁶ ProPublica, “How the Trump Administration Abandoned Plans for a Major Cut in Disability Benefits for Older Workers,” Eli Hager, November 20, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/trump-administration-social-security-disability-cuts>.

¹⁷ Tweet by More Perfect Union, September 19, 2025, <https://x.com/MorePerfectUS/status/1969078486355583260>.

¹⁸ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, “New War Room Investigation Reveals Trump Admin Dishonesty About Social Security Call Wait Times,” press release, June 26, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/new-war-room-investigation-reveals-trump-admin-dishonesty-about-social-security-call-wait-times>.

online – if the call was even answered at all. The Social Security War Room continues to push back on the administration’s dangerous ideas by demanding the agency reverse course on their broken staffing promise, inconsistent customer service metrics, DOGE’s infiltration of the agency, faulty tech rollouts, and the weaponization of Americans’ data to take away their earned benefits.¹⁹

- 2. Fact Checked the Administration’s Misinformation on Social Security:** When the administration put out inaccurate statements that misled the public about the state of Social Security, the War Room was quick to respond, fact checking the administration’s statements and debunking their myths.²⁰ This included the Trump Administration’s baseless claims of rampant fraud, along with its outright lies about the impact of OBBBA on Social Security benefits.²¹ Older Americans and people with disabilities deserve accurate information to make informed decisions regarding Social Security benefits, and the Social War Room continues to rapidly respond to the Administration’s misinformation to keep Americans up to date on threats to their benefits.

- 3. Secured Key Commitments from Commissioner Bisignano:** After a personal meeting with Senator Warren in July 2025, the Social Security War Room secured key commitments from Commissioner Bisignano to better protect Americans’ benefits, including that he would not make it easier to fire SSA workers by shifting them to Schedule F, he would ensure Americans who can only access benefits through paper checks would still be able to get them, and importantly, he would cooperate with an independent investigation of Social Security data and metrics.²² During the meeting, the Commissioner also admitted he was responsible for a blast email that went out to all SSA beneficiaries – without the review of SSA’s Office of General Counsel – inaccurately describing how President Trump’s OBBBA would affect benefits.²³

¹⁹ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, “Social Security War Room,” <https://www.warren.senate.gov/social-security-war-room>; Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, “ICYMI: Warren, Wyden, Senators Slam Social Security for Improperly Declaring Thousands Dead, Call for Watchdog Investigation,” press release, May 8, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/icymi-warren-wyden-senators-slam-social-security-for-improperly-declaring-thousands-dead-call-for-watchdog-investigation>; Letter from Senators Kirsten Gillibrand, Ron Wyden, Elizabeth Warren, et al., to SSA Commissioner Leland Dudek, April 8, 2025, <https://www.gillibrand.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/2025.04.08-DOGE-Attacks-on-SSA-Letter-1.pdf>.

²⁰ Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, “FACT CHECK: Social Security War Room Debunks Trump Admin’s Latest Social Security Lies and Misleading Statements,” press release, September 5, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/fact-check-social-security-war-room-debunks-trump-admins-latest-social-security-lies-and-misleading-statements>; Office of Senator Elizabeth Warren, “FACT CHECK: Social Security War Room Debunks Latest Social Security Administration Lie,” press release, July 9, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/fact-check-social-security-war-room-debunks-latest-social-security-administration-lies>.

²¹ Social Security War Room, “FACT CHECK: Social Security War Room Debunks Trump Admin’s Latest Social Security Lies and Misleading Statements,” September 5, 2025, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_to_ssa_re_field_office_reorganization.pdf.

²² Office of U.S. Senator Warren, “Warren Secures Key Commitments from Social Security Chief to Protect Americans’ Benefits,” press release, July 23, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-secures-key-commitments-from-social-security-chief-to-protect-americans-benefits>.

²³ *Id.*

4. Introduced Legislation to Protect, Reform, and Expand Social Security Benefits:

Democratic members of Congress in the Social Security War Room have also introduced legislation to safeguard Social Security and reverse the Trump administration's disastrous cuts, including introducing the *Keep Billionaires Out of Social Security Act* in the September.²⁴ Protecting Social Security also means ensuring future generations can access the program and expanding benefits for seniors and people with disabilities. In the fall, Democratic senators in the War Room also introduced the *Social Security Emergency Inflation Relief Act*, which would temporarily expand Social Security benefits to ensure they can meet the moment and cover the increased cost of living older Americans are facing under the Trump administration.²⁵ Later, in March, Social Security War Room leaders reintroduced the *Supplement Security Income Restoration (SSI) Act*, which would make long needed updates to the program to ensure beneficiaries can live with dignity and are not trapped in poverty.²⁶

The Social Security War Room Will Continue to Fight to Protect Social Security

The Social Security War Room's fight is not over. Commissioner Bisignano's disastrous leadership continues to put Americans' benefits at risk: he is haphazardly shifting employees and limit field office services to cover over the administration's catastrophic staff cuts and has indicated SSA is considering alarming solutions to address the insolvency of Social Security – including raising the retirement age. As the Trump administration, Commissioner Bisignano, and Republicans in Congress continue to undermine Social Security, the War Room will sound the alarm and fight back, preventing the administration from gutting the agency and working to increase Social Security benefits and ensure the program is here for generations to come. As the Social Security War Room enters its second year, it remains committed to upholding Social Security's promise to the American people.

²⁴ Office of U.S. Senator Warren, "Sanders, Warren, Social Security War Room Leaders Introduce Bill to Save Social Security from Trump Cuts," press release, September 10, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/sanders-warren-social-security-war-room-leaders-introduce-bill-to-save-social-security-from-trump-cuts>.

²⁵ Office of U.S. Senator Warren, "Warren, Schumer, Wyden, Senate Democrats Introduce Bill to Expand Social Security, Veterans Affairs Benefits," press release, October 30, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-schumer-wyden-senate-democrats-introduce-bill-to-expand-social-security-veterans-affairs-benefits>.

²⁶ Office of U.S. Senator Warren, "Warren, Grijalva, Schakowsky, Moylan, 30+ Lawmakers Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Update, Expand Lifeline Benefits for Seniors, Americans with Disabilities," press release, March 5, 2026, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/warren-grijalva-schakowsky-moylan-30-lawmakers-introduce-bipartisan-bill-to-update-expand-lifeline-benefits-for-seniors-americans-with-disabilities>.