



April 11, 2025

The Honorable Charles Grassley
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Grassley and Hassan,

On behalf of the millions of members and supporters of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, I write to endorse your legislation, the *Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act*. The National Committee commends you for introducing this legislation, which is designed to assist individuals whose identities have been stolen or misused.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America. According to the April 2021 Bulletin of the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics, an estimated 23 million persons, or about 9 percent of all United States residents age 16 or older, reported that they had been victims of identity theft in 2018. An AARP-sponsored report by Javelin Strategy & Research estimates that identity fraud led to \$47 billion in losses to victims in 2024. According to the Federal Trade Commission, over one-half of all victims of identity theft are age 50 and older, and their losses are much larger than younger age groups as the lifetime of wealth they have accumulated makes them attractive targets.

In addition to their financial losses, victims often face a daunting and frustrating process to reclaim their identity and significant numbers of victims report experiencing emotional distress attempting to resolve the problems created by the theft. The longer victims spent resolving the financial and credit problems, the more likely they were to report the emotional distress they experienced was severe.

Your bill requires the Social Security Administration (SSA) to provide a single point of contact for any individual whose Social Security account number has been misused, and further requires the single point of contact to track the individual's case to completion and coordinate with other specialized units to resolve case issues as quickly as possible. While this will not eliminate the challenges victims of identity theft face, it should help remove much of the frustration victims experience when attempting to address the theft and misuse of their Social Security numbers.

As a final point, should your bill be enacted, we look forward to working with you to ensure the SSA has sufficient resources to adequately implement the legislation while not detracting from the remainder of the Agency's critical mission. The operating budget for the Social Security Administration has suffered from many years of underfunding. Since FY 2010 alone, Social Security's core operating budget has declined more than 12 percent while its workloads rose over 20 percent. It is critical that any additional responsibilities placed upon this beleaguered Agency receive adequate new resources to function effectively.

On behalf of our members and supporters, the National Committee is pleased to endorse the *Improving Social Security's Service to Victims of Identity Theft Act*. The bill represents a very positive step to help protect seniors from fraud by improving the process for victims of identity theft. We look forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Richtman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Max Richtman
President and CEO