



Office of the Inspector General

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

**Written Testimony
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performing the duties of the Inspector General
for the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General
to the United States House of Representatives
Committee on Ways and Means
Joint Subcommittees on Social Security & Work and Welfare
Hearing with Commissioner of the Social Security Administration
Frank J. Bisignano
and on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2026
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Introduction

Chairmen Estes and LaHood, Ranking Members Larson and Davis, and Members of the Subcommittees, the Social Security Administration (SSA) faces numerous challenges fulfilling its mission administering programs and expects to issue over \$1.5 trillion in benefits to more than 70 million individuals in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025. This equates to about 1 in 5 U.S. residents who will receive a benefit from Social Security, providing financial support for older adults, people with disabilities, surviving spouses and children, and other eligible beneficiaries.

The SSA Office of the Inspector General (OIG) is committed to addressing those challenges through independent oversight of SSA's programs and operations. SSA OIG performs audits, evaluations, and investigations to prevent and detect fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement in SSA's programs and operations and to provide recommendations for improvements.

SSA OIG works to ensure SSA administers its programs and operates economically, efficiently, and effectively. It is important for the Subcommittees to understand how President Donald J. Trump's Budget for FY 2026 will provide the necessary resources for SSA OIG to execute its statutory role.

President's Budget for FY 2026

The Trump Administration's FY 2026 Budget for SSA OIG requests \$114.665 million in direct appropriations, which includes \$2 million to remain available until expended for modernization efforts for information technology (IT). In addition, the budget requests SSA transfer \$24.6 million to SSA OIG for the direct costs of leading the jointly operated anti-fraud Cooperative Disability Investigations (CDI) program. This funding level represents an increase of \$9.5 million over the FY 2025 Budget estimated funding level.

The President's budget request will support SSA OIG's core mission of auditing SSA's programs and operations and investigating Social Security fraud. Further, the requested funding will allow SSA OIG to take innovative steps forward by building data analytics capacity, increasing data-driven decision-making, and investing in IT and automation tools. Further, the funding will be utilized to implement the Trump Administration's Executive Orders and Presidential Memoranda, including [*Preventing Illegal Aliens from Obtaining Social Security Act Benefits*](#). This funding will lead to a nimbler and more responsive SSA OIG for the American public.

Return on Investment & Staffing

SSA OIG's investigations and audits lead to recoveries of significant amounts of improper payments, cost saving opportunities, and program improvements, resulting in a significant Return-on-Investment (ROI) for the American public. In FY 2024, SSA OIG's ROI was \$23 to \$1.¹ That is, for every \$1 in appropriated funding by the U.S. Congress, SSA OIG returned \$23.

Over the last three years, an SSA OIG audit, on average, has identified about \$33 million in questioned costs and about \$29 million in funds that could be put to better use. Further, each additional investigative full-time equivalent (FTE) could potentially result in an estimated 35 additional cases closed and almost \$1 million in additional monetary accomplishments.

Just prior to the start of the 2025 calendar year, SSA OIG employed 508 individuals. To date, 73 OIG employees have separated through the Deferred Resignation Program, Voluntary Early Retirement Authority, Voluntary Separation Incentive Payments, regular retirement, or transfer to other organizations. This is a reduction of almost 15 percent in SSA OIG's workforce. The current staffing of SSA OIG is 431.

| | SSA OIG Historical Staff on Duty by FY | | | | | |
|---------------|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | FY 2025 (Current) |
| Non-CDI Staff | 480 | 451 | 435 | 451 | 444 | 372 |
| CDI Staff | 43 | 41 | 54 | 65 | 64 | 55 |
| Total | 523 | 492 | 489 | 516 | 508 | 431 |

This includes all full-time permanent employees, part-time permanent employees, Senior Executive Service members, and the Inspector General. This excludes detailed employees.

Staffing in SSA OIG's Office of Audit (OA) has decreased by 20 percent and the Office of Investigations (OI) has decreased by 14 percent.

| Component | FY 2020 | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 | FY 2024 | 5 FY Average | FY 2025 (Current) | Percent Reduction |
|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| OA | 120 | 113 | 96 | 101 | 103 | 107 | 85 | 20% |
| OI | 267 | 248 | 229 | 233 | 229 | 241 | 208 | 14% |

SSA OIG is committed to recruiting and retaining high-performing staff based on merit to enable the organization to meet its statutory obligations related to independent, high-quality audit and investigations work, including ensuring OIG's investigative staff is appropriately resourced to present cases for potential prosecution to the expanded SSA full-time fraud prosecutor program in accordance with [Preventing Illegal Aliens from Obtaining Social Security Act Benefits](#). SSA OIG will also adhere to the following Executive Orders:

- Executive Order 14170: [Reforming The Federal Hiring Process And Restoring Merit To Government Service](#)
- Executive Order 14173: [Ending Illegal Discrimination And Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity](#)
- Executive Order 14284: [Strengthening Probationary Periods in the Federal Service](#)
- [Restoring Accountability for Career Senior Executives](#)

In addition, SSA OIG developed its Return to Office Implementation Plan and submitted it to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Personnel Management (OPM) on February 7, 2025, in accordance with the January 27, 2025, OMB-OPM joint memorandum [Agency Return to Office Implementation Plans](#). Further, SSA OIG remains committed to maximizing its resources through several cost saving efforts. SSA OIG also enhanced organizational efficiencies by centralizing logistical and operational efforts and continues to identify efficiencies. SSA OIG will evaluate space utilization for additional savings. SSA OIG's

¹ FY 2024, SSA OIG could state the ROI is \$97-to-\$1 due to three audits issued that discovered over \$9 billion in funds SSA could use more efficiently if action was taken to implement SSA OIG's recommendations. Excluding these audits, SSA OIG's ROI would be \$23-to-\$1.

Office of Resource Management reviewed all contracts and continues to look for additional strategies to improve efficiency and effectiveness and achieve better results for the American public.

As is standard, SSA OIG will continue to assess on an ongoing basis whether audit and investigative workload adjustments will be required throughout this FY, considering resources, emerging or critical issues, vulnerabilities and risks, and other factors. Paramount, SSA OIG is focused on utilizing and maximizing resources to continue to fulfill statutory requirements.

Audit

OA conducts comprehensive financial, IT, and performance audits of SSA's programs and operations to evaluate SSA's compliance with laws, regulations, and other requirements. These audits identify issues and recommend corrective action to improve SSA programs and operations, leading to increased efficiency and greater effectiveness, in addition to identifying fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

During FY 2024 and the first half of FY 2025, SSA OIG issued 60 audits and identified almost \$2 billion in questioned costs and over \$10.7 billion in funds that could have been put to better use. SSA OIG core audit oversight efforts revolve around SSA's most significant [management challenges](#). SSA OIG annually identifies these challenges based on SSA risk assessments and audit and investigative work.

SSA OIG implements a risk-based approach to determine which discretionary audits to perform based on several factors, including: the maturity of SSA's controls over workloads, issues of significant Congressional and public interest, and the number of individuals that could be affected. The FY 2026 Budget will allow SSA OIG to continue to perform audits that help to improve the prevention, detection, and recovery of improper payments, ensuring SSA pays the correct person the correct amount.

On March 3, 2025, SSA OIG released its report on [Recommendations that Had Not Been Implemented as of January 29, 2025](#). The report detailed SSA had not implemented 280 audit recommendations. These recommendations stem from audits in which SSA OIG identified potential savings of over \$18.4 billion, including an estimated \$5.2 billion in questioned costs and another \$13.2 billion in funds that SSA could put to better use. SSA OIG continuously engage with SSA to monitor the status of recommendations and track its efforts towards implementation.

Year after year, SSA OIG consistently reports SSA challenges related to improving the prevention, detection, and recovery of improper payments. From FYs 2015 through 2023, SSA reported paying almost \$10 trillion in benefits and reported making approximately \$82.3 billion (0.83 percent) in improper payments, most of which were overpayments. SSA estimates it made approximately \$10.6 billion in improper payments in FY 2023. Of those, \$8.9 billion were overpayments and \$1.7 billion were underpayments.

SSA must be a responsible steward of the funds entrusted to its care by minimizing the risk of making improper payments and recovering overpayments when they occur. Given the magnitude of SSA payments, even the slightest error in the payment process can result in millions of dollars in overpayments or underpayments.

Preventing improper payments is more advantageous than recovering them since the Agency must expend additional resources to recover the overpayments or process additional payments to rectify underpayments. Prior audit work identified some of the sources of improper payments and internal control issues. SSA OIG made recommendations, including those related to automation, data analytics, and third party data collection, to help SSA improve its ability to prevent and better detect improper payments (see [Preventing, Detecting, and Recovering Improper Payments](#)). In FY 2026, SSA OIG will continue prioritizing audit work to review improper payments and high-dollar overpayments. As of June 03, 2025, SSA OIG had underway 51 audits and reviews related to improving the prevention, detection, and recovery of improper payments. (A list of all SSA OIG ongoing audit work is available at oig.ssa.gov.)

SSA serves hundreds of thousands of American people each day in person at a field office located in their community; over the phone; or online through their personal [my Social Security](#) account. It is essential that Social Security provide secure, accurate, and timely service.

In FYs 2024 and 2025, SSA OIG has issued several audit reports related to SSA's service delivery, including:

- [*The Social Security Administration's Administration of the Next Generation Telephony Project Contract*](#)
- [*Disability Waiting Period Exclusions*](#)
- [*Reducing Processing Centers' Pending Actions*](#)
- [*Customer Wait Times in the Social Security Administration's Field Offices and Card Centers*](#)

SSA is in the early stages of working to address the recommendations in these reports and SSA OIG will continue to monitor progress. SSA OIG's audit work in several other areas has already led, or will shortly lead, to real improvements to SSA's programs and operations.

- In an [audit](#) of SSA's work review determinations, SSA OIG estimated SSA made \$553 million in questionable benefit payments because of errors the Agency made when evaluating disabled beneficiaries' work. The cause was due to inadequate controls in SSA's eWork system and unclear work incentive policies and forms. The report included five recommendations for SSA, including: taking corrective action on the errors identified; incorporating controls and increased functionality in the system that will replace eWork; providing employees refresher training to properly monitor accurate completion of manual updates while increased automation efforts are pending; and updating policy and forms with clearer, specific instructions. SSA agreed with all the recommendations and has completed actions to implement three of them.
- SSA OIG conducted an [audit](#) regarding SSA's use of state death data and found death report discrepancies led to \$327 million in improper payments and had cost SSA millions in unnecessary workloads. Improvements to SSA's Death Information Processing System to increase automated processing of reports with valid death information would improve SSA's administrative efficiency. In response to the audit, SSA recently created a workgroup to set up policies and procedures for managing its death records and will incorporate suggested improvements discussed in the report into this workgroup's efforts.
- SSA OIG completed an [audit](#) estimating that SSA delayed over 40,000 initial disability applications even though they qualified as priority cases, such as Quick Disability Determination, Compassionate Allowance, Terminal Illness, Military Casualty/Wounded Warrior, Homeless, and Presumptive Disability/Blindness. SSA OIG recommended SSA modify processing instructions for priority cases to include appropriate processing timeframes and follow-up procedures to support SSA's and disability determination services' monitoring of processing times. In response, SSA issued an internal communication in July 2024 to remind staff to expedite priority cases. SSA has also been analyzing processing time data, developing policy guidelines, and ensuring oversight mechanisms are in place. SSA anticipates publishing its updated policy by the end of June 2025.

Investigations

OI conducts criminal investigations into allegations of fraud and misconduct related to SSA programs, operations, and employees. The office works closely with federal, state, and local law enforcement partners. Investigative efforts may result in criminal or civil prosecutions, civil monetary penalties, administrative sanctions, or Agency administrative actions. Fraud in SSA programs weakens the trust fund. Individuals who cheat the system take money away from those who are eligible. OI has an enormous responsibility to protect taxpayer dollars.

During FY 2024 and the first half of FY 2025, SSA OIG investigations resulted in 833 criminal convictions and contributed to over \$322 million in monetary accomplishments, which includes court-ordered restitution,

recoveries, settlements, judgments, fines, civil and administrative actions, and estimated savings resulting from investigations.

Transnational organized crime has expanded dramatically in size, scope, and influence. Transnational organized criminals are threatening United States interests by using cyber technologies to perpetrate sophisticated frauds. SSA OIG has become more agile and responsive to those organized criminal syndicates who seek to exploit both SSA and its beneficiaries for financial gain. These investigations require advanced techniques and tools for case management, data collection, digital evidence analysis, and storage and analysis of large datasets. In addition to meeting technical specifications, SSA OIG's software and hardware must comply with [*Strengthening and Promoting Innovation in the Nation's Cybersecurity*](#), which requires federal agencies to implement advanced security measures to significantly reduce the risk of successful cyberattacks on the government's digital infrastructure.

Providing the necessary equipment for SSA OIG's Criminal Investigators (1811) is essential. SSA OIG is one of the largest OIGs in the Federal Government conducting criminal investigations, making arrests, and carrying firearms. These investigations bring our agents into contact with violent felons and subjects of alleged criminal violations. SSA OIG would be in harms' way without a means to protect themselves or the public. Many of the targets of SSA OIG investigations have lengthy and violent criminal histories, necessitating a highly trained and properly equipped workforce.

SSA OIG special agents are issued 9 mm handguns for standard duty. However, in many situations, our agents are involved in moderate to high-risk enforcement operations that require armaments beyond standard duty handguns. In furtherance of those objectives, SSA OIG maintains a limited inventory of shotguns to be deployed in high-risk situations, cover greater distances, and provide enhanced capabilities. However, our shotgun inventory is over 20 years old, unserviceable, and not safe for field deployment. Additionally, SSA OIG's duty handguns are at the end of their lifespan and need to be replaced with a newer version with a modern optic to enhance operational capabilities and conform with current law enforcement standards and best practices.

CDI Program

Disability fraud comprises a significant part of SSA OIG's investigative workload. Schemes include, among other activities, feigning medical impairments, concealing work activity or medical improvement while receiving disability benefits, or sophisticated conspiracies facilitated by doctors, lawyers, or other third parties, aimed at defrauding the disability programs.

The CDI program is a statutorily nationwide anti-fraud initiative that combats fraud within SSA's disability programs. The CDI program accomplishes its mission, in part, by reviewing questionable disability claims to stop payment before it occurs, or as soon as fraud is suspected. The program supports the Agency's continuing disability review and redetermination processes when fraud may be involved.

The *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015* mandated that SSA achieve nationwide CDI coverage by the end of FY 2022. Working with state and local partners, SSA and SSA OIG successfully fulfilled this mandate, and today 50 CDI units cover each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

Each CDI unit consists of an SSA OIG special agent who serves as a team leader, and personnel from SSA, State disability determination services, and state or local law enforcement partners. CDI units combine federal and state resources and expertise to benefit not only Social Security programs, but also other federal and state programs, such as food and nutrition assistance, housing assistance, Medicare, and Medicaid.

CDI unit members use their respective skills and expertise to investigate suspicious statements and activities of disability claimants, medical providers, and other third parties, obtain evidence, and provide investigative findings that help SSA, and State disability determination agencies make accurate and timely disability determinations. Since the CDI program's inception in 1997, CDI investigations have contributed to a projected

savings to taxpayers of approximately \$8.2 billion: \$4.6 billion in projected savings to SSA's disability programs, and \$3.6 billion in projected savings to related federal and state benefit programs. Fraud in SSA programs weakens the trust fund. Those individuals who cheat the system take money away from those who truly need it most by providing them with a measure of financial security. Recent accomplishments of the CDI program include the following.

| Category | April 1, 2023 - September 30, 2023 | October 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024 | April 1, 2024 - September 30, 2024 | October 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025 |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Disability claims denied or ceased | 574 | 560 | 627 | 620 |
| Projected savings for SSA programs | \$39.0 million | \$39.7 million | \$40.9 million | \$41.5 million |
| Projected recoveries for SSA programs | \$5.7 million | \$5.8 million | \$9.9 million | \$11.9 million |
| Projected savings for non-SSA programs | \$49.7 million | \$47.5 million | \$54.2 million | \$45.7 million |

SSA OIG is committed to the success of the CDI Program by increasing oversight and improving operations through dedicated leadership and management. To provide appropriate levels of national investigative oversight for the CDI Program and meet the operational demands of the nationwide coverage, SSA OIG increased the number of employees positions supporting the program to 73. However, as of FY 2025, only 60 FTEs are supporting the program, a reduction of approximately 18% from full staffing level.

CDI Program Costs

As of May 2025, 17 CDI units are operating without a law enforcement partner. Operating CDI units without full law enforcement partner participation threatens the success and impact of this critical program integrity initiative by decreasing investigative capacity and delaying timely disability determinations. SSA and SSA OIG direct outreach to state governors requesting their cooperation and law enforcement partnership in the CDI program was not successful.

The FY 2026 Budget requests SSA transfer \$24.6 million from SSA's Limitation on Administrative Expenses (LAE) program integrity cap adjustment, which funds the CDI program, to SSA OIG for SSA OIG's full direct costs of leading the jointly operated anti-fraud CDI program. This funding level represents an increase of \$5 million over the FY 2025 Budget requested level of \$19.6 million to fund required investigative support for CDI units. The additional transfer authority will provide the CDI program with an additional 17 FTEs and facilitate a solution to the law enforcement recruitment and retention challenges without additional appropriations or increasing the overall cost of the program. As the Subcommittee is aware, these are program integrity funds already appropriated for SSA's LAE to pay for law enforcement partners. SSA OIG will use the additional funding transferred from SSA to cover increases to CDI operational and personnel costs, as well as directly hire investigative personnel to support units without a law enforcement partner.

The CDI program has a proven history of success, and SSA OIG will continue to ensure the integrity of SSA's disability programs and promote the solvency of the Social Security trust funds, while preserving the public's confidence in SSA's stewardship.

Prevent Illegal Aliens from Obtaining Social Security Act Benefits

OI has had a longstanding agreement to work with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Document and Benefit Fraud Task Forces located around the nation. These task forces focus on investigating use and trafficking of illegal documents and Social Security number (SSN) misuse, and fraudulent application and receipt of government benefits by those non eligible individuals. SSA OIG has also permanently embedded SSA OIG most senior investigative analyst with the HSI Cross Border Financial Fraud Crime Center working jointly on issues related to illegal immigration, transnational organized crime, and worksite enforcement.

On April 15, 2025, President Donald J. Trump issued Presidential Memorandum, [Preventing Illegal Aliens from Obtaining Social Security Act Benefits](#). The memorandum requires the Commissioner of Social Security, in consultation with the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to take measures that ensure ineligible aliens are not receiving funds from *Social Security Act* programs.

This memorandum provides for fraud prosecution of SSA's Special Assistant United States Attorneys (SAUSA) program to 50 full-time fraud prosecutors in jurisdictions that encompass populations of illegal aliens. SSA has multiple SAUSAs in some locations.

In January 2025, in addition to SSA OIG's core investigative mission, SSA OIG began to engage with law enforcement partners on the following initiatives that align with the priorities of the Trump Administration and prevents fraud in SSA programs:

- The Removable Alien Project – to identify individuals who are receiving benefits from SSA and were ordered deported but remained in the country.
- Unaccompanied Alien Children – to locate for minors who remain in the country and their whereabouts are known – and may result in investigation of human trafficking and representative payee misuse.
- Travel & Residency Enforcement Coop – to identify Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients that conceal foreign travel and residency.

These initiatives involve analysis of large data sets to identify investigative leads. As these leads come to fruition, SSA OIG will dedicate required resources to conduct investigations of individuals suspected of defrauding SSA programs and support the workload stream for the newly assigned SAUSAs and subsequent criminal prosecutions.

Further, SSA OIG has the delegated authority to verify SSNs from official law enforcement requests. Since late January 2025, SSA OIG has received a significant increase in requests to verify SSNs to a level more than double that all of FY 2024. To address these essential, additional workloads, SSA OIG realigned and trained staff to perform analytical work, ensuring SSA benefits and other federal government program benefits are provided only to individuals who are eligible.

Direct Deposit Diversion Fraud

Through collaboration and by leveraging data, SSA OIG is enhancing its analytical capabilities to identify clusters of direct deposit fraud. SSA OIG acquires transactional data from SSA for all recent direct deposit changes and then searches for allegations in its case management system to identify the most used bank accounts. SSA OIG then sends the most used bank accounts, corroborated with fraud allegations, to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Services to acquire non-receipt information and identify other possible government payments made to the same accounts.

SSA OIG is enhancing its analytical capabilities to proactively identify direct deposit fraud. SSA OIG recently started to compare acquired transactional data from SSA for all recent direct deposit changes with data from allegations in its case management system with the same bank account(s). Through this link analysis, SSA OIG is capable of identifying reoccurring use of fraudulent bank accounts and can predict scheduled payments with a high likelihood of fraud. The data is then shared with SSA for corroboration and reversion/correction to the proper bank account before the payments are made. Our first wave of 15 referrals resulted in 11 reversions saving \$20,428.70 from being sent to fraudulent bank accounts last month.

Collaboration and Partnerships

SSA OIG collaborates with other federal agencies in the fight against fraud in Social Security and other federal programs. For example, SSA OIG works with the Federal Bureau of Investigation on joint investigations, bringing a wealth of data and expertise in identity-related matters. The Elder Justice Initiative, led by the U.S. Department of Justice, brings together and facilitates coordination among numerous state, local, and federal entities with capabilities and authority to fight elder fraud and elder abuse. SSA OIG is also involved with

several regulatory agencies in the fight against SSA-related fraud, chiefly the Federal Trade Commission, and an anti-fraud working group formed under auspices of the Federal Communications Commission to combat phone scams.

The National Anti-Fraud Committee

The National Anti-Fraud Committee (NAFC) is a partnership between SSA and SSA OIG that supports strategies for combatting fraud, waste, and abuse in SSA programs and operations. Through NAFC quarterly meetings and an annual summit, SSA and SSA OIG share information to create concrete steps for addressing fraud and mitigating risk vulnerabilities in SSA programs and operations. The discussions help inform SSA OIG oversight, highlight government and industry best practices, and lead to increased agency-wide understanding of the fraud challenges facing SSA. NAFC serves as a focal point for SSA's anti-fraud efforts and serves as a demonstration of SSA and SSA OIG's mutual commitment in working together to combat fraud in SSA's programs and operations.

Examining and Leveraging Artificial Intelligence

Public and private sector entities will continue to explore using artificial intelligence (AI) technology as a tool to enhance operations, create efficiencies, and improve customer service. In accordance with the Administration's directive to focus on utilizing AI to modernize the Federal Government (see [Eliminating Barriers for Federal Artificial Intelligence Use and Procurement](#)), SSA OIG will leverage this emerging technology.

AI also can be used to commit fraud to direct millions of dollars away from deserving SSA beneficiaries. Some examples are AI-powered chatbots used to divert direct deposits to spurious accounts; AI-generated imposter scams; AI tools to generate fraudulent identification documents enabling identify theft and impersonation schemes; AI to create an audio deep-fake or a deep-fake video; and AI to create synthetic identities, which can be used to fraudulently apply for benefits or otherwise direct funds away from legitimate SSA beneficiaries.

In FY 2023, SSA OIG established an internal AI task force comprised of investigators, auditors, IT specialists, and lawyers to confront these issues. SSA OIG is working across government to share best practices on ways to fight AI-related fraud and use AI to detect fraud. SSA OIG also participates in a quarterly AI working group with SSA, as it is important to unwrap the potential transformational impact of AI to benefit the American public but in a way that balances enhanced customer service and limits the risk of fraud. In FY 2026, SSA OIG's oversight responsibilities will increase significantly in this area to identify, and minimize vulnerabilities in agency systems, security, and programs and make recommendations to SSA's AI efforts. Significant investments will be required to investigate AI-enabled criminal activity, protect vulnerable Americans, and provide federal and state prosecutors with the forensic data needed to successfully prosecute fraud against SSA.

Social Security Scams

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reported, in 2024, consumers lost \$12.5 billion to scams, including government imposter scams. SSA OIG continues to receive reports of scammers impersonating government employees or alleging a Social Security-related problem to steal money or personal information from victims. While SSA OIG has achieved remarkable results in the reduction of Social Security-related scam reports, according to the FTC, Social Security-related scams are still one of the top reported government imposter scams.

In FY 2024, SSA OIG received close to 89,000 imposter scams allegations. These numbers represent a persistent problem that threatens the integrity of SSA programs and operations. SSA OIG has devoted significant resources and established a multipronged approach to combat Social Security-related scams through criminal investigations, civil enforcement, and public outreach and education efforts.

SSA OIG criminal investigations and investigative counsel work diligently to develop leads, prosecute criminals, and disrupt scams. SSA OIG proactively shares data, information, and best practices with partner organizations to support a government-wide approach to combatting scams and fraud to better protect the American public. SSA OIG will continue to commit staff to analyze imposter scam allegations, develop investigative leads, and deploy effective investigative strategies to combat these fraud schemes.

Section 1140 of the *Social Security Act* is a consumer protection law that prohibits misleading consumers by giving a false impression of association with, or authorization or endorsement by, SSA through any type of communication. Working together with federal and state law enforcement partners, SSA OIG shares knowledge, strategizes based on its analyses of industry trends, and coordinates parallel enforcement actions for maximum consumer protection impact. In FY 2026, SSA OIG will continue to issue take-down requests for fraud and imposter websites and social media pages that violate Section 1140. SSA OIG will pursue entities that send misleading mailers, call centers and corporations that engage in fraudulent or misleading phone campaigns, and telecommunications companies that transit SSA-related scam calls into the country from overseas.

Throughout the year, SSA OIG collaborates across all levels of government, leverages anti-fraud interests of private companies, and engages with special interest groups who focus on combatting fraud, protecting vulnerable populations, and serving local communities to raise awareness of government imposter scams.

In March 2026, SSA OIG, in collaboration with SSA, plans to lead National Slam the Scam Day for the 7th year, providing Americans with a clear, consistent message and resources to promote a better understanding of scams, the tactics scammers use, and emerging trends – providing the United States with a national outreach strategy in response to the growing threat of scams. SSA OIG will continue to track scam allegations submitted to SSA OIG, issue scam alerts to warn of recurring or emerging scam tactics and amplify anti-fraud messages across social media platforms.

SSA OIG's multipronged approach has significantly contributed to the disruption of these scams. SSA OIG remains engaged and committed to maintaining institutional knowledge to investigate these scams by working with federal, state, and local partners, as well as consumer advocacy groups, to protect the American public from criminals posing as SSA or SSA OIG officials. The FY 2026 Budget will allow SSA OIG to better anticipate, recognize, and efficiently mitigate new and emerging fraud schemes.

SSA OIG is committed to collaborating on federal, state, and local levels of government to support a holistic government-wide approach to combatting fraud and protecting the American public.

IT Modernization

SSA OIG continues to make significant progress in modernizing and transforming applications that support investigative processes and workloads as well as administrative lines of business applications. The \$2 million set-aside for IT modernization is critical in SSA OIG's efforts to modernizing applications that support investigative and audit processes with business process management solutions. This account provides for the continued enhancement of SSA OIG's critical systems, and the integration of internal applications with SSA systems, which will enhance data sharing capabilities with external partners.

In FY 2024, SSA OIG used dedicated IT modernization funding for critical enhancements existing suite of enterprise applications. To fulfill SSA OIG's investigative mission, IT specialists and contractors continued to perform necessary maintenance and enhance the Investigative Case Management System to ensure a secure, stable, and scalable platform. SSA OIG designed, developed, and implemented an IT Change Management System to increase operational process efficiencies. SSA OIG also redesigned the web forms used by the public to report alleged fraud and imposter scams to improve the user experience and improve the quality of the information gathered.

Our efforts in FY 2025 focused on modernizing our underlying data structure that supports mission-critical law enforcement operations. Through data analytics, a team of IT specialists created an authoritative data source

to enhance reporting capabilities and business intelligence reporting. Additionally, this fiscal year the team started work to build an analytics platform that can be leveraged internally to streamline and expedite data extractions necessary for ongoing audits and investigations. The team began construction of index files, documentation, and requirements gathering to ensure the new platform is efficient and comprehensive.

In FY 2026, SSA OIG will also continue to leverage emerging technologies and introduce modernizations that improve usability and functionality and enhance business processes. Adoption of emerging technologies such as cloud platforms require that SSA OIG modernize application and platform architecture to optimize security, performance, agility, and scalability. In FY 2026, SSA OIG will implement application platform architectural improvements to eliminate the use of old technologies. SSA OIG will deploy these mandatory enhancements to all systems to transition to a cloud-hosted environment. Using cloud-managed solutions will aid SSA OIG in minimizing future application maintenance and allowing easier enhancements.

Conclusion

Chairman Estes and LaHood, Ranking Member Larson and Davis, thank you for the opportunity to submit a written statement for this important hearing with SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano. It is essential for the Subcommittees on Social Security and Work and Welfare understand the breadth of issues SSA OIG will be focusing on in FY 2026. Further, SSA OIG looks forward to working in a collaborative relationship with Commissioner Bisignano as he begins his tenure to make changes at SSA.

The dedicated employees of SSA OIG work tirelessly to provide critically important independent oversight of SSA programs and operations. The funding requested in the FY 2026 Budget supports new and ongoing SSA OIG efforts and ensures it remains steadfast in its mission to ensure accountability and integrity within SSA. SSA OIG is committed to preventing fraud, waste, and abuse while enhancing program efficiency. The American people can expect continued vigilance and innovation in oversight efforts.