July 19, 2023

Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Blvd
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

Dear Acting Commissioner Kijakazi:

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming a primary driver of emerging technologies and will impact society in ways the public and private sectors are just beginning to understand. Recognizing the promise and the potential risks of this technology is imperative.

The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) must collaborate as the agency examines the use of AI to make programs more efficient. Further, AI makes SSA funds, particularly the delivery of those funds electronically to beneficiaries, susceptible to fraud. It has also made the automation of cyber-enabled attacks against government network infrastructure more feasible and could be used to increase the sophistication of such attacks. The internet portals government agencies use to interact with beneficiaries, businesses, or members of the public pose a significant vulnerability.

AI will be a powerful tool to support the federal government's ability to detect and prevent the fraudulent disbursement of taxpayers' dollars by improving decision-making and spotting abnormalities and outliers. However, the OIG understands that criminals will use AI to make fraudulent schemes easier and faster to execute, the deceptions more credible and realistic, and the fraud more profitable. The OIG is in the early stages of understanding how criminals will leverage AI to commit fraud against SSA.

I recently established an internal Task Force within the OIG to study AI and related technology. From this effort, the OIG expects to determine the tools, processes, and staffing we need to investigate and deter AI-related fraud and leverage AI in our oversight efforts. Consistent with OMB Memorandum M-22-04, we are requesting to engage in front-end collaboration with SSA to understand how the agency plans to use AI. To work with SSA, we will review any applicable risk assessments, vulnerabilities, and efficiencies gained utilizing AI in SSA programs. Addressing AI threats to the agency and Social Security beneficiaries is essential.

I look forward to working with you on this emerging technology.

Sincerely,

Gail S. Ennis
Inspector General