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Media Inquiries: <https://oig.ssa.gov>
oig.dcom@ssa.gov

The Social Security Number: The Lynchpin to Identity Theft

SSA OIG Testifies to Its Commitment in Combatting Identity Theft

On May 24, 2023, Jeffrey Brown, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, Office of Audits, Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG), testified before the United States House Committee on Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee hearing on SSA's role in combatting identity fraud.

"The Social Security number (SSN) has essentially become the cornerstone of the identity framework. Individuals are often required to use their SSN as identifiers to open bank accounts, apply for loans, apply for unemployment, and for many other routine matters requiring proof of identification," said Brown in his opening statement.

"Unsurprisingly, the expanded use of SSNs as a national identifier has given rise to individuals using other people's SSNs for illegal purposes," he said. "Stolen SSNs have been used to obtain benefits and services, establish credit, gain employment, and hide identities to commit other crimes. The SSN has become the lynchpin to identity theft."

Brown went on to discuss how SSA OIG has established a multidisciplinary team of professionals that develop and implement innovative approaches to combat identity theft and scams through audits, criminal investigations and prosecution, civil enforcement, public outreach, and education. Written statements for the record and the full hearing can be viewed on the United States House Committee on Ways and Means website: [Social Security Subcommittee Hearing on the Social Security Administration's Role in Combatting Identity Fraud - House Committee on Ways and Means](#).

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