

SOCIAL SECURITY CHILD PROTECTION ACT OF 2018

APRIL 13, 2018.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. BRADY of Texas, from the Committee on Ways and Means, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1512]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Ways and Means, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1512) to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide for the reissuance of Social Security account numbers to young children in cases where confidentiality has been compromised, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

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The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Social Security Child Protection Act of 2018”.

SEC. 2. REISSUANCE OF SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS TO YOUNG CHILDREN IN CASES WHERE CONFIDENTIALITY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 205(c)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(c)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and

(2) by inserting after clause (ii) the following new clause:

“(iii) In any case in which a Social Security account number has been issued to a child who has not attained the age of 14 pursuant to subclause (IV) or (V) of clause (i) and it is demonstrated by evidence, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security, and submitted under penalty of perjury to the Commissioner by a parent or guardian of the child that in the course of transmission of the social security card to the child, the confidentiality of such number has been compromised by reason of theft of such social security card, the Commissioner shall issue a new Social Security account number to such child and make note in the records maintained with respect to such child of the pertinent information received by the Commissioner regarding the theft of the social security card.”.

(b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

I. SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

A. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 1512, as reported by the Committee on Ways and Means, amends Title II of the Social Security Act to direct the Commissioner of Social Security to issue a new Social Security number (SSN) to a child under the age of 14 when that child’s parent or guardian has provided sufficient evidence, as determined by the Commissioner and under penalty of perjury, that the child’s Social Security card has been stolen while being mailed to his or her address.

B. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Identity theft is a serious issue affecting tens of millions of Americans. The Federal Trade Commission, the lead federal agency on identity theft, reported almost 400,000 complaints of identity theft in 2017, an almost 30 percent increase from 2013.

The SSN has become an increasingly valuable target for identity theft due to its widespread use throughout the financial sector. Children are particularly vulnerable to SSN theft because they do not work, drive, or establish credit—thereby extending the time an identity thief can misuse the child’s SSN before being noticed or causing harm.

As required by P.L. 115–59, federal agencies are not permitted to mail documents containing a full SSN unless absolutely necessary. In its first annual report required by P.L. 115–59, the Social Security Administration (SSA) indicated that it would consider the mailing of a Social Security card to be necessary.¹ In fiscal year

¹*First Annual Report On Removing Social Security Numbers from Mailed Documents P.L. 115–59*, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION, at page 4 (October 13, 2017).

2017, the SSA issued approximately 16.5 million new and replacement Social Security cards. In calendar year 2017, approximately 8,000 Social Security cards were re-issued to children under the age of 18, based on reports that the numberholder did not receive a mailed Social Security card.

An Inspector General report released on April 2, 2018 found that approximately 360,000 of the approximately 16.5 million new and replacement Social Security cards mailed out annually are returned by the Post Office as undeliverable.² The report also found that these undeliverable cards were not always adequately protected at various stages in their handling by both SSA and Post Office employees.

The SSA will only assign a new SSN in a limited number of circumstances, including identity theft and abuse or harassment. In the case of identity theft, current SSA policy generally requires a person to show both that their SSN has been misused by a third party and that this misuse has resulted in harm to the numberholder. Generally, this harm must have occurred within two years of the application for a new SSN.

The Social Security Child Protection Act (H.R. 1512) protects children under the age of 14 whose Social Security cards have been stolen in transit by allowing them to receive a new SSN without having to wait to be harmed by that SSN's misuse.

C. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Background

H.R. 1512 was introduced on March 13, 2017 as the Social Security Child Protection Act of 2017 and was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means. Related legislation has been introduced in the 111th, 112th, and 114th Congresses.

Committee hearings

On May 23, 2017, the Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Social Security held a joint oversight hearing with the Oversight and Government Reform Committee Subcommittee on Information Technology on "Protecting Americans' Identities: Examining Efforts to Limit the Use of Social Security Numbers." At the hearing, identity theft was highlighted as one of the fastest growing crimes. The hearing also highlighted the danger the theft of an SSN can pose to an individual.

On May 8, 2012, the Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Social Security and the Subcommittee on Oversight held a joint oversight hearing on "Identity Theft and Tax Fraud." Among the topics discussed were the dangers of the theft of SSNs, including those of children, and the dangers of mail being delivered incorrectly.

On September 1, 2011, the Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Social Security held a field hearing in Plano, TX on "Social Security Numbers and Child Identity Theft." At the hearing, witnesses discussed the impacts of child identity theft, the role of SSNs in identity theft, and options to better safeguard SSNs.

² *Undeliverable Social Security Number Cards A-15-1750279, Office of Inspector General, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION* (April 2, 2018).

Committee action

The Committee on Ways and Means marked up H.R. 1512, re-titled the Social Security Child Protection Act of 2018, on April 11, 2018, and ordered the bill, as amended, favorably reported (with a quorum being present).

II. EXPLANATION OF THE BILL**A. SOCIAL SECURITY CHILD PROTECTION ACT OF 2018 (SEC. 1 OF THE BILL)**

PRESENT LAW

No provision.

REASON FOR CHANGE

The Committee believes that the short title reflects the policy and intent included in the legislation.

EXPLANATION OF PROVISION

This section contains the short title of the bill, the “Social Security Child Protection Act of 2018.”

EFFECTIVE DATE

The provision is effective on the date of enactment.

B. REISSUANCE OF SOCIAL SECURITY ACCOUNT NUMBERS TO YOUNG CHILDREN IN CASES WHERE CONFIDENTIALITY HAS BEEN COMPROMISED (SEC. 2 OF THE BILL)

PRESENT LAW

Current law does not require the SSA to issue, or prohibit the SSA from issuing, a new SSN to a current numberholder. However, before the SSA will issue a new SSN, current SSA policy requires a numberholder to not only show that his or her SSN has been misused by a third party, but also that this misuse caused actual harm or disadvantage.

REASON FOR CHANGE

Children are particularly vulnerable to SSN theft because they do not work, drive, or establish credit—thereby extending the time an identity thief can misuse the child’s SSN before being noticed or causing harm. In the case of identity theft, current SSA policy generally requires a person to show both that their SSN has been misused by a third party and that this misuse has resulted in harm to the numberholder. This harm is generally required to have occurred within two years of applying for a new SSN. It is the view of the Committee that if a child’s Social Security card has been stolen, that child should not have to wait to be harmed by the misuse of that SSN before a new SSN can be issued.

EXPLANATION OF PROVISION

This section requires the Commissioner of Social Security to issue a new SSN to a child under the age of 14 when that child’s parent or guardian has provided sufficient evidence, as determined

by the Commissioner and under penalty of perjury, that the child's Social Security card has been stolen while being transmitted to the child.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The provision is effective 180 days following the date of enactment.

III. VOTES OF THE COMMITTEE

In compliance with clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made concerning the vote of the Committee on Ways and Means in its consideration of H.R. 1512, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide for the reissuance of Social Security account numbers to young children in cases where confidentiality has been compromised, on April 11, 2018.

The Chairman's amendment in the nature of a substitute was adopted by a voice vote (with a quorum being present).

The bill, H.R. 1512, was ordered favorably reported as amended by voice vote (with a quorum being present).

IV. BUDGET EFFECTS OF THE BILL

A. COMMITTEE ESTIMATE OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS

In compliance with clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is made concerning the effects on the budget of the bill, H.R. 1512, as reported. The Committee agrees with the estimate prepared by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which is included below.

B. STATEMENT REGARDING NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND TAX EXPENDITURES BUDGET AUTHORITY

In compliance with clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that the bill involves no new or increased budget authority. The Committee states further that the bill involves no new or increased tax expenditures.

C. COST ESTIMATE PREPARED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE

In compliance with clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, requiring a cost estimate prepared by the CBO, the following statement by CBO is provided.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, April 12, 2018.

Hon. KEVIN BRADY,
*Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1512, the Social Security Child Protection Act of 2018.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Emily Stern.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 1512—Social Security Child Protection Act of 2018

H.R. 1512 would require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to issue a new Social Security number to any child under the age of 14 whose card is stolen during transmission.

Using information from SSA, CBO estimates that because such incidents are rare, the costs of implementing the bill would be less than \$500,000 each year; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Enacting H.R. 1512 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 1512 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2029.

H.R. 1512 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Emily Stern. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

V. OTHER MATTERS TO BE DISCUSSED UNDER THE RULES OF THE HOUSE

A. COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee made findings and recommendations that are reflected in this report.

B. STATEMENT OF GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With respect to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee advises that the bill does not authorize funding, so no statement of general performance goals and objectives is required.

C. INFORMATION RELATING TO UNFUNDED MANDATES

This information is provided in accordance with section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Pub. L. No. 104–4).

The Committee has determined that the bill does not contain Federal mandates on the private sector. The Committee has determined that the bill does not impose a Federal intergovernmental mandate on State, local, or tribal governments.

D. CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

With respect to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has carefully reviewed the provisions of the bill, and states that the provisions of the bill do not

contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits within the meaning of the rule.

E. DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In compliance with clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that no provision of the bill establishes or reauthorizes: (1) a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program; (2) a program included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139; or (3) a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Pub. L. No. 95–220, as amended by Pub. L. No. 98–169).

F. DISCLOSURE OF DIRECTED RULE MAKINGS

In compliance with Sec. 3(i) of H. Res. 5 (115th Congress), the following statement is made concerning directed rule makings: The Committee advises that the bill requires no directed rulemakings within the meaning of such section.

VI. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

A. TEXT OF EXISTING LAW AMENDED OR REPEALED BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e)(1)(A) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the text of each section proposed to be repealed by the bill, as reported, is shown below:

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

TITLE II—FEDERAL OLD-AGE, SURVIVORS, AND DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS

* * * * *

EVIDENCE, PROCEDURE, AND CERTIFICATION FOR PAYMENT

SEC. 205. (a) The Commissioner of Social Security shall have full power and authority to make rules and regulations and to establish procedures, not inconsistent with the provisions of this title, which are necessary or appropriate to carry out such provisions, and shall adopt reasonable and proper rules and regulations to regulate and provide for the nature and extent of the proofs and evidence and the method of taking and furnishing the same in order to establish the right to benefits hereunder.

(b)(1) The Commissioner of Social Security is directed to make findings of fact, and decisions as to the rights of any individual applying for a payment under this title. Any such decision by the Commissioner of Social Security which involves a determination of disability and which is in whole or in part unfavorable to such individual shall contain a statement of the case, in understandable language, setting forth a discussion of the evidence, and stating the Commissioner's determination and the reason or reasons upon which it is based. Upon request by any such individual or upon request by a wife, divorced wife, widow, surviving divorced wife, surviving divorced mother, surviving divorced father, husband, divorced husband, widower, surviving divorced husband, child, or parent who makes a showing in writing that his or her rights may be prejudiced by any decision the Commissioner of Social Security has rendered, the Commissioner shall give such applicant and such other individual reasonable notice and opportunity for a hearing with respect to such decision, and, if a hearing is held, shall, on the basis of evidence adduced at the hearing, affirm, modify, or reverse the Commissioner's findings of fact and such decision. Any such request with respect to such a decision must be filed within sixty days after notice of such decision is received by the individual making such request. The Commissioner of Social Security is further authorized, on the Commissioner's own motion, to hold such hearings and to conduct such investigations and other proceedings as the Commissioner may deem necessary or proper for the administration of this title. In the course of any hearing, investigation, or other proceeding, the Commissioner may administer oaths and affirmations, examine witnesses, and receive evidence. Evidence may be received at any hearing before the Commissioner of Social Security even though inadmissible under rules of evidence applicable to court procedure.

(2) In any case where—

(A) an individual is a recipient of disability insurance benefits, or of child's, widow's, or widower's insurance benefits based on disability,

(B) the physical or mental impairment on the basis of which such benefits are payable is found to have ceased, not to have existed, or to no longer be disabling, and

(C) as a consequence of the finding described in subparagraph (B), such individual is determined by the Commissioner of Social Security not to be entitled to such benefits,

any reconsideration of the finding described in subparagraph (B), in connection with a reconsideration by the Commissioner of Social Security (before any hearing under paragraph (1) on the issue of such entitlement) of the Commissioner's determination described in subparagraph (C), shall be made only after opportunity for an evidentiary hearing, with regard to the finding described in subparagraph (B), which is reasonably accessible to such individual. Any reconsideration of a finding described in subparagraph (B) may be made either by the State agency or the Commissioner of Social Security where the finding was originally made by the State agency, and shall be made by the Commissioner of Social Security where the finding was originally made by the Commissioner of Social Security. In the case of a reconsideration by a State agency of a finding described in subparagraph (B) which was originally made by

such State agency, the evidentiary hearing shall be held by an adjudicatory unit of the State agency other than the unit that made the finding described in subparagraph (B). In the case of a reconsideration by the Commissioner of Social Security of a finding described in subparagraph (B) which was originally made by the Commissioner of Social Security, the evidentiary hearing shall be held by a person other than the person or persons who made the finding described in subparagraph (B).

(3)(A) A failure to timely request review of an initial adverse determination with respect to an application for any benefit under this title or an adverse determination on reconsideration of such an initial determination shall not serve as a basis for denial of a subsequent application for any benefit under this title if the applicant demonstrates that the applicant, or any other individual referred to in paragraph (1), failed to so request such a review acting in good faith reliance upon incorrect, incomplete, or misleading information, relating to the consequences of reapplying for benefits in lieu of seeking review of an adverse determination, provided by any officer or employee of the Social Security Administration or any State agency acting under section 221.

(B) In any notice of an adverse determination with respect to which a review may be requested under paragraph (1), the Commissioner of Social Security shall describe in clear and specific language the effect on possible entitlement to benefits under this title of choosing to reapply in lieu of requesting review of the determination.

(c)(1) For the purposes of this subsection—

(A) The term “year” means a calendar year when used with respect to wages and a taxable year when used with respect to self-employment income.

(B) The term “time limitation” means a period of three years, three months, and fifteen days.

(C) The term “survivor” means an individual’s spouse, surviving divorced wife, surviving divorced husband, surviving divorced mother, surviving divorced father, child, or parent, who survives such individual.

(D) The term “period” when used with respect to self-employment income means a taxable year and when used with respect to wages means—

(i) a quarter if wages were reported or should have been reported on a quarterly basis on tax returns filed with the Secretary of the Treasury or his delegate under section 6011 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or regulations thereunder (or on reports filed by a State under section 218(e) (as in effect prior to December 31, 1986) or regulations thereunder),

(ii) a year if wages were reported or should have been reported on a yearly basis on such tax returns or reports, or

(iii) the half year beginning January 1 or July 1 in the case of wages which were reported or should have been reported for calendar year 1937.

(2)(A) On the basis of information obtained by or submitted to the Commissioner of Social Security, and after such verification thereof as the Commissioner deems necessary, the Commissioner of

Social Security shall establish and maintain records of the amounts of wages paid to, and the amounts of self-employment income derived by, each individual and of the periods in which such wages were paid and such income was derived and, upon request, shall inform any individual or his survivor, or the legal representative of such individual or his estate, of the amounts of wages and self-employment income of such individual and the periods during which such wages were paid and such income was derived, as shown by such records at the time of such request.

(B)(i) In carrying out the Commissioner's duties under subparagraph (A) and subparagraph (F), the Commissioner of Social Security shall take affirmative measures to assure that social security account numbers will, to the maximum extent practicable, be assigned to all members of appropriate groups or categories of individuals by assigning such numbers (or ascertaining that such numbers have already been assigned):

(I) to aliens at the time of their lawful admission to the United States either for permanent residence or under other authority of law permitting them to engage in employment in the United States and to other aliens at such time as their status is so changed as to make it lawful for them to engage in such employment;

(II) to any individual who is an applicant for or recipient of benefits under any program financed in whole or in part from Federal funds including any child on whose behalf such benefits are claimed by another person; and

(III) to any other individual when it appears that he could have been but was not assigned an account number under the provisions of subclauses (I) or (II) but only after such investigation as is necessary to establish to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Social Security, the identity of such individual, the fact that an account number has not already been assigned to such individual, and the fact that such individual is a citizen or a noncitizen who is not, because of his alien status, prohibited from engaging in employment;

and, in carrying out such duties, the Commissioner of Social Security is authorized to take affirmative measures to assure the issuance of social security numbers:

(IV) to or on behalf of children who are below school age at the request of their parents or guardians; and

(V) to children of school age at the time of their first enrollment in school.

(ii) The Commissioner of Social Security shall require of applicants for social security account numbers such evidence as may be necessary to establish the age, citizenship, or alien status, and true identity of such applicants, and to determine which (if any) social security account number has previously been assigned to such individual. With respect to an application for a social security account number for an individual who has not attained the age of 18 before such application, such evidence shall include the information described in subparagraph (C)(ii).

(iii) In any case in which a Social Security account number has been issued to a child who has not attained the age of 14 pursuant to subclause (IV) or (V) of clause (i) and it is demonstrated by evidence, as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security, and

submitted under penalty of perjury to the Commissioner by a parent or guardian of the child that in the course of transmission of the social security card to the child, the confidentiality of such number has been compromised by reason of theft of such social security card, the Commissioner shall issue a new Social Security account number to such child and make note in the records maintained with respect to such child of the pertinent information received by the Commissioner regarding the theft of the social security card.

[(iii)] (iv) In carrying out the requirements of this subparagraph, the Commissioner of Social Security shall enter into such agreements as may be necessary with the Attorney General and other officials and with State and local welfare agencies and school authorities (including nonpublic school authorities).

(C)(i) It is the policy of the United States that any State (or political subdivision thereof) may, in the administration of any tax, general public assistance, driver's license, or motor vehicle registration law within its jurisdiction, utilize the social security account numbers issued by the Commissioner of Social Security for the purpose of establishing the identification of individuals affected by such law, and may require any individual who is or appears to be so affected to furnish to such State (or political subdivision thereof) or any agency thereof having administrative responsibility for the law involved, the social security account number (or numbers, if he has more than one such number) issued to him by the Commissioner of Social Security.

(ii) In the administration of any law involving the issuance of a birth certificate, each State shall require each parent to furnish to such State (or political subdivision thereof) or any agency thereof having administrative responsibility for the law involved, the social security account number (or numbers, if the parent has more than one such number) issued to the parent unless the State (in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Commissioner of Social Security) finds good cause for not requiring the furnishing of such number. The State shall make numbers furnished under this subclause available to the Commissioner of Social Security and the agency administering the State's plan under part D of title IV in accordance with Federal or State law and regulation. Such numbers shall not be recorded on the birth certificate. A State shall not use any social security account number, obtained with respect to the issuance by the State of a birth certificate, for any purpose other than for the enforcement of child support orders in effect in the State, unless section 7(a) of the Privacy Act of 1974 does not prohibit the State from requiring the disclosure of such number, by reason of the State having adopted, before January 1, 1975, a statute or regulation requiring such disclosure.

(iii)(I) In the administration of section 9 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2018) involving the determination of the qualifications of applicants under such Act, the Secretary of Agriculture may require each applicant retail store or wholesale food concern to furnish to the Secretary of Agriculture the social security account number of each individual who is an officer of the store or concern and, in the case of a privately owned applicant, furnish the social security account numbers of the owners of such applicant. No officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture shall have access to any such number for any purpose other than the es-

establishment and maintenance of a list of the names and social security account numbers of such individuals for use in determining those applicants who have been previously sanctioned or convicted under section 12 or 15 of such Act (7 U.S.C. 2021 or 2024).

(II) The Secretary of Agriculture may share any information contained in any list referred to in subclause (I) with any other agency or instrumentality of the United States which otherwise has access to social security account numbers in accordance with this subsection or other applicable Federal law, except that the Secretary of Agriculture may share such information only to the extent that such Secretary determines such sharing would assist in verifying and matching such information against information maintained by such other agency or instrumentality. Any such information shared pursuant to this subclause may be used by such other agency or instrumentality only for the purpose of effective administration and enforcement of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 or for the purpose of investigation of violations of other Federal laws or enforcement of such laws.

(III) The Secretary of Agriculture, and the head of any other agency or instrumentality referred to in this subclause, shall restrict, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Social Security, access to social security account numbers obtained pursuant to this clause only to officers and employees of the United States whose duties or responsibilities require access for the purposes described in subclause (II).

(IV) The Secretary of Agriculture, and the head of any agency or instrumentality with which information is shared pursuant to clause (II), shall provide such other safeguards as the Commissioner of Social Security determines to be necessary or appropriate to protect the confidentiality of the social security account numbers.

(iv) In the administration of section 506 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act, the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation may require each policyholder and each reinsured company to furnish to the insurer or to the Corporation the social security account number of such policyholder, subject to the requirements of this clause. No officer or employee of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation shall have access to any such number for any purpose other than the establishment of a system of records necessary for the effective administration of such Act. The Manager of the Corporation may require each policyholder to provide to the Manager, at such times and in such manner as prescribed by the Manager, the social security account number of each individual that holds or acquires a substantial beneficial interest in the policyholder. For purposes of this clause, the term "substantial beneficial interest" means not less than 5 percent of all beneficial interest in the policyholder. The Secretary of Agriculture shall restrict, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Social Security, access to social security account numbers obtained pursuant to this clause only to officers and employees of the United States or authorized persons whose duties or responsibilities require access for the administration of the Federal Crop Insurance Act. The Secretary of Agriculture shall provide such other safeguards as the Commissioner of Social Security determines to be necessary or appropriate to protect the confidentiality of such social security account numbers. For purposes of this

clause the term “authorized person” means an officer or employee of an insurer whom the Manager of the Corporation designates by rule, subject to appropriate safeguards including a prohibition against the release of such social security account number (other than to the Corporation) by such person.

(v) If and to the extent that any provision of Federal law heretofore enacted is inconsistent with the policy set forth in clause (i), such provision shall, on and after the date of the enactment of this subparagraph, be null, void, and of no effect. If and to the extent that any such provision is inconsistent with the requirement set forth in clause (ii), such provision shall, on and after the date of the enactment of such subclause, be null, void, and of no effect.

(vi)(I) For purposes of clause (i) of this subparagraph, an agency of a State (or political subdivision thereof) charged with the administration of any general public assistance, driver’s license, or motor vehicle registration law which did not use the social security account number for identification under a law or regulation adopted before January 1, 1975, may require an individual to disclose his or her social security number to such agency solely for the purpose of administering the laws referred to in clause (i) above and for the purpose of responding to requests for information from an agency administering a program funded under part A of title IV or an agency operating pursuant to the provisions of part D of such title.

(II) Any State or political subdivision thereof (and any person acting as an agent of such an agency or instrumentality), in the administration of any driver’s license or motor vehicle registration law within its jurisdiction, may not display a social security account number issued by the Commissioner of Social Security (or any derivative of such number) on any driver’s license, motor vehicle registration, or personal identification card (as defined in section 7212(a)(2) of the 9/11 Commission Implementation Act of 2004), or include, on any such license, registration, or personal identification card, a magnetic strip, bar code, or other means of communication which conveys such number (or derivative thereof).

(vii) For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “State” includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

(viii)(I) Social security account numbers and related records that are obtained or maintained by authorized persons pursuant to any provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990, shall be confidential, and no authorized person shall disclose any such social security account number or related record.

(II) Paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 7213(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 shall apply with respect to the unauthorized willful disclosure to any person of social security account numbers and related records obtained or maintained by an authorized person pursuant to a provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990, in the same manner and to the same extent as such paragraphs apply with respect to unauthorized disclosures of return and return information described in such paragraphs. Paragraph (4) of section 7213(a) of such Code shall apply with respect to the willful offer of any item of material value in exchange for any such social security account number or related record in the same manner and to the same extent as such paragraph applies with respect

to offers (in exchange for any return or return information) described in such paragraph.

(III) For purposes of this clause, the term “authorized person” means an officer or employee of the United States, an officer or employee of any State, political subdivision of a State, or agency of a State or political subdivision of a State, and any other person (or officer or employee thereof), who has or had access to social security account numbers or related records pursuant to any provision of law enacted on or after October 1, 1990. For purposes of this subclause, the term “officer or employee” includes a former officer or employee.

(IV) For purposes of this clause, the term “related record” means any record, list, or compilation that indicates, directly or indirectly, the identity of any individual with respect to whom a social security account number or a request for a social security account number is maintained pursuant to this clause.

(ix) In the administration of the provisions of chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, and the Longshore and Harbor Workers’ Compensation Act (33 U.S.C. 901 et seq.), the Secretary of Labor may require by regulation that any person filing a notice of injury or a claim for benefits under such provisions provide as part of such notice or claim such person’s social security account number, subject to the requirements of this clause. No officer or employee of the Department of Labor shall have access to any such number for any purpose other than the establishment of a system of records necessary for the effective administration of such provisions. The Secretary of Labor shall restrict, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Social Security, access to social security account numbers obtained pursuant to this clause to officers and employees of the United States whose duties or responsibilities require access for the administration or enforcement of such provisions. The Secretary of Labor shall provide such other safeguards as the Commissioner of Social Security determines to be necessary or appropriate to protect the confidentiality of the social security account numbers.

(x) The Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Exchanges established under section 1311 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, are authorized to collect and use the names and social security account numbers of individuals as required to administer the provisions of, and the amendments made by, the such Act.

(xi) No Federal, State, or local agency may display the Social Security account number of any individual, or any derivative of such number, on any check issued for any payment by the Federal, State, or local agency.

(xii) No Federal, State, or local agency may employ, or enter into a contract for the use or employment of, prisoners in any capacity that would allow such prisoners access to the Social Security account numbers of other individuals. For purposes of this clause, the term “prisoner” means an individual confined in a jail, prison, or other penal institution or correctional facility pursuant to such individual’s conviction of a criminal offense.

(xiii) The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Commissioner of Social Security, shall establish cost-effective procedures to ensure that a Social Security account num-

ber (or derivative thereof) is not displayed, coded, or embedded on the Medicare card issued to an individual who is entitled to benefits under part A of title XVIII or enrolled under part B of title XVIII and that any other identifier displayed on such card is not identifiable as a Social Security account number (or derivative thereof).

(D)(i) It is the policy of the United States that—

(I) any State (or any political subdivision of a State) and any authorized blood donation facility may utilize the social security account numbers issued by the Commissioner of Social Security for the purpose of identifying blood donors, and

(II) any State (or political subdivision of a State) may require any individual who donates blood within such State (or political subdivision) to furnish to such State (or political subdivision), to any agency thereof having related administrative responsibility, or to any authorized blood donation facility the social security account number (or numbers, if the donor has more than one such number) issued to the donor by the Commissioner of Social Security.

(ii) If and to the extent that any provision of Federal law enacted before the date of the enactment of this subparagraph is inconsistent with the policy set forth in clause (i), such provision shall, on and after such date, be null, void, and of no effect.

(iii) For purposes of this subparagraph—

(I) the term “authorized blood donation facility” means an entity described in section 1141(h)(1)(B), and

(II) the term “State” includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

(E)(i) It is the policy of the United States that—

(I) any State (or any political subdivision of a State) may utilize the social security account numbers issued by the Commissioner of Social Security for the additional purposes described in clause (ii) if such numbers have been collected and are otherwise utilized by such State (or political subdivision) in accordance with applicable law, and

(II) any district court of the United States may use, for such additional purposes, any such social security account numbers which have been so collected and are so utilized by any State.

(ii) The additional purposes described in this clause are the following:

(I) Identifying duplicate names of individuals on master lists used for jury selection purposes.

(II) Identifying on such master lists those individuals who are ineligible to serve on a jury by reason of their conviction of a felony.

(iii) To the extent that any provision of Federal law enacted before the date of the enactment of this subparagraph is inconsistent with the policy set forth in clause (i), such provision shall, on and after that date, be null, void, and of no effect.

(iv) For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “State” has the meaning such term has in subparagraph (D).

(F) The Commissioner of Social Security shall require, as a condition for receipt of benefits under this title, that an individual fur-

nish satisfactory proof of a social security account number assigned to such individual by the Commissioner of Social Security or, in the case of an individual to whom no such number has been assigned, that such individual make proper application for assignment of such a number.

(G) The Commissioner of Social Security shall issue a social security card to each individual at the time of the issuance of a social security account number to such individual. The social security card shall be made of banknote paper, and (to the maximum extent practicable) shall be a card which cannot be counterfeited.

(H) The Commissioner of Social Security shall share with the Secretary of the Treasury the information obtained by the Commissioner pursuant to the second sentence of subparagraph (B)(ii) and to subparagraph (C)(ii) for the purpose of administering those sections of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 which grant tax benefits based on support or residence of children.

(3) The Commissioner's record shall be evidence for the purpose of proceedings before the Commissioner of Social Security or any court of the amounts of wages paid to, and self-employment income derived by, an individual and of the periods in which such wages were paid and such income was derived. The absence of an entry in such records as to wages alleged to have been paid to, or as to self-employment income alleged to have been derived by, an individual in any period shall be evidence that no such alleged wages were paid to, or that no such alleged income was derived by, such individual during such period.

(4) Prior to the expiration of the time limitation following any year the Commissioner of Social Security may, if it is brought to the Commissioner's attention that any entry of wages or self-employment income in the Commissioner's records for such year is erroneous or that any item of wages or self-employment income for such year has been omitted from such records, correct such entry or include such omitted item in his records, as the case may be. After the expiration of the time limitation following any year—

(A) the Commissioner's records (with changes, if any, made pursuant to paragraph (5)) of the amounts of wages paid to, and self-employment income derived by, an individual during any period in such year shall be conclusive for the purposes of this title;

(B) the absence of an entry in the Commissioner's records as to the wages alleged to have been paid by an employer to an individual during any period in such year shall be presumptive evidence for the purposes of this title that no such alleged wages were paid to such individual in such period; and

(C) the absence of an entry in the Commissioner's records as to the self-employment income alleged to have been derived by an individual in such year shall be conclusive for the purposes of this title that no such alleged self-employment income was derived by such individual in such year unless it is shown that he filed a tax return of his self-employment income for such year before the expiration of the time limitation following such year, in which case the Commissioner of Social Security shall include in the Commissioner's records the self-employment income of such individual for such year.

(5) After the expiration of the time limitation following any year in which wages were paid or alleged to have been paid to, or self-employment income was derived or alleged to have been derived by, an individual, the Commissioner of Social Security may change or delete any entry with respect to wages or self-employment income in the Commissioner's records of such year for such individual or include in the Commissioner's records of such year for such individual any omitted item of wages or self-employment income but only—

(A) if an application for monthly benefits or for a lump-sum death payment was filed within the time limitation following such year; except that no such change, deletion, or inclusion may be made pursuant to this subparagraph after a final decision upon the application for monthly benefits or lump-sum death payment;

(B) if within the time limitation following such year an individual or his survivor makes a request for a change or deletion, or for an inclusion of an omitted item, and alleges in writing that the Commissioner's records of the wages paid to, or the self-employment income derived by, such individual in such year are in one or more respects erroneous; except that no such change, deletion, or inclusion may be made pursuant to this subparagraph after a final decision upon such request. Written notice of the Commissioner's decision on any such request shall be given to the individual who made the request;

(C) to correct errors apparent on the face of such records;

(D) to transfer items to records of the Railroad Retirement Board if such items were credited under this title when they should have been credited under the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 or 1974, or to enter items transferred by the Railroad Retirement Board which have been credited under the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 or 1974 when they should have been credited under this title;

(E) to delete or reduce the amount of any entry which is erroneous as a result of fraud;

(F) to conform the Commissioner's records to—

(i) tax returns or portions thereof (including information returns and other written statements) filed with the Commissioner of Internal Revenue under title VIII of the Social Security Act, under subchapter E of chapter 1 or subchapter A of chapter 9 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1939, under chapter 2 or 21 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 or the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or under regulations made under authority of such title, subchapter, or chapter;

(ii) wage reports filed by a State pursuant to an agreement under section 218 or regulations of the Commissioner of Social Security thereunder; or

(iii) assessments of amounts due under an agreement pursuant to section 218 (as in effect prior to December 31, 1986), if such assessments are made within the period specified in subsection (q) of such section (as so in effect), or allowances of credits or refunds of overpayments by a State under an agreement pursuant to such section;

except that no amount of self-employment income of an individual for any taxable year (if such return or statement was filed after the expiration of the time limitation following the taxable year) shall be included in the Commissioner's records pursuant to this subparagraph;

(G) to correct errors made in the allocation, to individuals or periods, of wages or self-employment income entered in the records of the Commissioner of Social Security;

(H) to include wages paid during any period in such year to an individual by an employer;

(I) to enter items which constitute remuneration for employment under subsection (o), such entries to be in accordance with certified reports of records made by the Railroad Retirement Board pursuant to section 5(k)(3) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 or section 7(b)(7) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974; or

(J) to include self-employment income for any taxable year, up to, but not in excess of, the amount of wages deleted by the Commissioner of Social Security as payments erroneously included in such records as wages paid to such individual, if such income (or net earnings from self-employment), not already included in such records as self-employment income, is included in a return or statement (referred to in subparagraph (F)) filed before the expiration of the time limitation following the taxable year in which such deletion of wages is made.

(6) Written notice of any deletion or reduction under paragraph (4) or (5) shall be given to the individual whose record is involved or to his survivor, except that (A) in the case of a deletion or reduction with respect to any entry of wages such notice shall be given to such individual only if he has previously been notified by the Commissioner of Social Security of the amount of his wages for the period involved, and (B) such notice shall be given to such survivor only if he or the individual whose record is involved has previously been notified by the Commissioner of Social Security of the amount of such individual's wages and self-employment income for the period involved.

(7) Upon request in writing (within such period, after any change or refusal of a request for a change of the Commissioner's records pursuant to this subsection, as the Commissioner of Social Security may prescribe), opportunity for hearing with respect to such change or refusal shall be afforded to any individual or his survivor. If a hearing is held pursuant to this paragraph the Commissioner of Social Security shall make findings of fact and a decision based upon the evidence adduced at such hearing and shall include any omitted items, or change or delete any entry, in the Commissioner's records as may be required by such findings and decision.

(8) A translation into English by a third party of a statement made in a foreign language by an applicant for or beneficiary of monthly insurance benefits under this title shall not be regarded as reliable for any purpose under this title unless the third party, under penalty or perjury—

(A) certifies that the translation is accurate; and

(B) discloses the nature and scope of the relationship between the third party and the applicant or recipient, as the case may be.

(9) Decisions of the Commissioner of Social Security under this subsection shall be reviewable by commencing a civil action in the United States district court as provided in subsection (g).

(d) For the purpose of any hearing, investigation, or other proceeding authorized or directed under this title, or relative to any other matter within the Commissioner's jurisdiction hereunder, the Commissioner of Social Security shall have power to issue subpoenas requiring the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of any evidence that relates to any matter under investigation or in question before the Commissioner of Social Security. Such attendance of witnesses and production of evidence at the designated place of such hearing, investigation, or other proceeding may be required from any place in the United States or in any Territory or possession thereof. Subpoenas of the Commissioner of Social Security shall be served by anyone authorized by the Commissioner (1) by delivering a copy thereof to the individual named therein, or (2) by registered mail or by certified mail addressed to such individual at his last dwelling place or principal place of business. A verified return by the individual so serving the subpoena setting forth the manner of service, or, in the case of service by registered mail or by certified mail, the return post-office receipt therefor signed by the individual so served, shall be proof of service. Witnesses so subpoenaed shall be paid the same fees and mileage as are paid witnesses in the district courts of the United States.

(e) In case of contumacy by, or refusal to obey a subpoena duly served upon, any person, any district court of the United States for the judicial district in which said person charged with contumacy or refusal to obey is found or resides or transacts business, upon application by the Commissioner of Social Security, shall have jurisdiction to issue an order requiring such person to appear and give testimony, or to appear and produce evidence, or both; any failure to obey such order of the court may be punished by said court as contempt thereof.

(g) Any individual, after any final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security made after a hearing to which he was a party, irrespective of the amount in controversy, may obtain a review of such decision by a civil action commenced within sixty days after the mailing to him of notice of such decision or within such further time as the Commissioner of Social Security may allow. Such action shall be brought in the district court of the United States for the judicial district in which the plaintiff resides, or has his principal place of business, or, if he does not reside or have his principal place of business within any such judicial district, in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia. As part of the Commissioner's answer the Commissioner of Social Security shall file a certified copy of the transcript of the record including the evidence upon which the findings and decision complained of are based. The court shall have power to enter, upon the pleadings and transcript of the record, a judgment affirming, modifying, or reversing the decision of the Commissioner of Social Security, with or without remanding the cause for a rehearing. The findings of the Commissioner of Social Security as to any fact, if supported by substantial evidence, shall be conclusive, and where a claim has been denied by the Commissioner of Social Security or a decision is ren-

dered under subsection (b) hereof which is adverse to an individual who was a party to the hearing before the Commissioner of Social Security, because of failure of the claimant or such individual to submit proof in conformity with any regulation prescribed under subsection (a) hereof, the court shall review only the question of conformity with such regulations and the validity of such regulations. The court may, on motion of the Commissioner of Social Security made for good cause shown before the Commissioner files the Commissioner's answer, remand the case to the Commissioner of Social Security for further action by the Commissioner of Social Security, and it may at any time order additional evidence to be taken before the Commissioner of Social Security, but only upon a showing that there is new evidence which is material and that there is good cause for the failure to incorporate such evidence into the record in a prior proceeding; and the Commissioner of Social Security shall, after the case is remanded, and after hearing such additional evidence if so ordered, modify or affirm the Commissioner's findings of fact or the Commissioner's decision, or both, and shall file with the court any such additional and modified findings of fact and decision, and, in any case in which the Commissioner has not made a decision fully favorable to the individual, a transcript of the additional record and testimony upon which the Commissioner's action in modifying or affirming was based. Such additional or modified findings of fact and decision shall be reviewable only to the extent provided for review of the original findings of fact and decision. The judgment of the court shall be final except that it shall be subject to review in the same manner as a judgment in other civil actions. Any action instituted in accordance with this subsection shall survive notwithstanding any change in the person occupying the office of Commissioner of Social Security or any vacancy in such office.

(h) The findings and decision of the Commissioner of Social Security after a hearing shall be binding upon all individuals who were parties to such hearing. No findings of fact or decision of the Commissioner of Social Security shall be reviewed by any person, tribunal, or governmental agency except as herein provided. No action against the United States, the Commissioner of Social Security or any officer or employee thereof shall be brought under section 1331 or 1346 of title 28, United States Code, to recover on any claim arising under this title.

(i) Upon final decision of the Commissioner of Social Security, or upon final judgment of any court of competent jurisdiction, that any person is entitled to any payment or payments under this title, the Commissioner of Social Security shall certify to the Managing Trustee the name and address of the person so entitled to receive such payment or payments, the amount of such payment or payments, and the time at which such payment or payments should be made, and the Managing Trustee, through the Fiscal Service of the Department of the Treasury, and prior to any action thereon by the General Accounting Office, shall make payment in accordance with the certification of the Commissioner of Social Security (except that in the case of (A) an individual who will have completed ten years of service (or five or more years of service, all of which accrues after December 31, 1995) creditable under the Railroad Retirement Act of 1937 or the Railroad Retirement Act of

1974, (B) the wife or husband or divorced wife or divorced husband of such an individual, (C) any survivor of such an individual if such survivor is entitled, or could upon application become entitled, to an annuity under section 2 of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974, and (D) any other person entitled to benefits under section 202 of this Act on the basis of the wages and self-employment income of such an individual (except a survivor of such an individual where such individual did not have a current connection with the railroad industry, as defined in the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974, at the time of his death), such certification shall be made to the Railroad Retirement Board which shall provide for such payment or payments to such person on behalf of the Managing Trustee in accordance with the provisions of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974: *Provided*, That where a review of the Commissioner's decision is or may be sought under subsection (g) the Commissioner of Social Security may withhold certification of payment pending such review. The Managing Trustee shall not be held personally liable for any payment or payments made in accordance with a certification by the Commissioner of Social Security.

Representative Payees

(j)(1)(A) If the Commissioner of Social Security determines that the interest of any individual under this title would be served thereby, certification of payment of such individual's benefit under this title may be made, regardless of the legal competency or incompetency of the individual, either for direct payment to the individual, or for his or her use and benefit, to another individual, or an organization, with respect to whom the requirements of paragraph (2) have been met (hereinafter in this subsection referred to as the individual's "representative payee"). If the Commissioner of Social Security or a court of competent jurisdiction determines that a representative payee has misused any individual's benefit paid to such representative payee pursuant to this subsection or section 807 or 1631(a)(2), the Commissioner of Social Security shall promptly revoke certification for payment of benefits to such representative payee pursuant to this subsection and certify payment to an alternative representative payee or, if the interest of the individual under this title would be served thereby, to the individual.

(B) In the case of an individual entitled to benefits based on disability, the payment of such benefits shall be made to a representative payee if the Commissioner of Social Security determines that such payment would serve the interest of the individual because the individual also has an alcoholism or drug addiction condition (as determined by the Commissioner) and the individual is incapable of managing such benefits.

(2)(A) Any certification made under paragraph (1) for payment of benefits to an individual's representative payee shall be made on the basis of—

(i) an investigation by the Commissioner of Social Security of the person to serve as representative payee, which shall be conducted in advance of such certification and shall, to the extent practicable, include a face-to-face interview with such person, and

(ii) adequate evidence that such certification is in the interest of such individual (as determined by the Commissioner of Social Security in regulations).

(B)(i) As part of the investigation referred to in subparagraph (A)(i), the Commissioner of Social Security shall—

(I) require the person being investigated to submit documented proof of the identity of such person, unless information establishing such identity has been submitted with an application for benefits under this title, title VIII, or title XVI,

(II) verify such person's social security account number (or employer identification number),

(III) determine whether such person has been convicted of a violation of section 208, 811, or 1632,

(IV) obtain information concerning whether such person has been convicted of any other offense under Federal or State law which resulted in imprisonment for more than 1 year,

(V) obtain information concerning whether such person is a person described in section 202(x)(1)(A)(iv), and

(VI) determine whether certification of payment of benefits to such person has been revoked pursuant to this subsection, the designation of such person as a representative payee has been revoked pursuant to section 807(a), or payment of benefits to such person has been terminated pursuant to section 1631(a)(2)(A)(iii) by reason of misuse of funds paid as benefits under this title, title VIII, or title XVI.

(ii) The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish and maintain a centralized file, which shall be updated periodically and which shall be in a form which renders it readily retrievable by each servicing office of the Social Security Administration. Such file shall consist of—

(I) a list of the names and social security account numbers (or employer identification numbers) of all persons with respect to whom certification of payment of benefits has been revoked on or after January 1, 1991, pursuant to this subsection, whose designation as a representative payee has been revoked pursuant to section 807(a), or with respect to whom payment of benefits has been terminated on or after such date pursuant to section 1631(a)(2)(A)(iii), by reason of misuse of funds paid as benefits under this title, title VIII, or title XVI, and

(II) a list of the names and social security account numbers (or employer identification numbers) of all persons who have been convicted of a violation of section 208, 811, or 1632.

(iii) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 552a of title 5, United States Code, or any other provision of Federal or State law (other than section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and section 1106(c) of this Act), the Commissioner shall furnish any Federal, State, or local law enforcement officer, upon the written request of the officer, with the current address, social security account number, and photograph (if applicable) of any person investigated under this paragraph, if the officer furnishes the Commissioner with the name of such person and such other identifying information as may reasonably be required by the Commissioner to establish the unique identity of such person, and notifies the Commissioner that—

(I) such person is described in section 202(x)(1)(A)(iv),

(II) such person has information that is necessary for the officer to conduct the officer's official duties, and

(III) the location or apprehension of such person is within the officer's official duties.

(C)(i) Benefits of an individual may not be certified for payment to any other person pursuant to this subsection if—

(I) such person has previously been convicted as described in subparagraph (B)(i)(III),

(II) except as provided in clause (ii), certification of payment of benefits to such person under this subsection has previously been revoked as described in subparagraph (B)(i)(VI) the designation of such person as a representative payee has been revoked pursuant to section 807(a), or payment of benefits to such person pursuant to section 1631(a)(2)(A)(ii) has previously been terminated as described in section 1631(a)(2)(B)(ii)(VI),

(III) except as provided in clause (iii), such person is a creditor of such individual who provides such individual with goods or services for consideration,

(IV) such person has previously been convicted as described in subparagraph (B)(i)(IV), unless the Commissioner determines that such certification would be appropriate notwithstanding such conviction, or

(V) such person is a person described in section 202(x)(1)(A)(iv).

(ii) The Commissioner of Social Security shall prescribe regulations under which the Commissioner of Social Security may grant exemptions to any person from the provisions of clause (i)(II) on a case-by-case basis if such exemption is in the best interest of the individual whose benefits would be paid to such person pursuant to this subsection.

(iii) Clause (i)(III) shall not apply with respect to any person who is a creditor referred to therein if such creditor is—

(I) a relative of such individual if such relative resides in the same household as such individual,

(II) a legal guardian or legal representative of such individual,

(III) a facility that is licensed or certified as a care facility under the law of a State or a political subdivision of a State,

(IV) a person who is an administrator, owner, or employee of a facility referred to in subclause (III) if such individual resides in such facility, and the certification of payment to such facility or such person is made only after good faith efforts have been made by the local servicing office of the Social Security Administration to locate an alternative representative payee to whom such certification of payment would serve the best interests of such individual, or

(V) an individual who is determined by the Commissioner of Social Security, on the basis of written findings and under procedures which the Commissioner of Social Security shall prescribe by regulation, to be acceptable to serve as a representative payee.

(iv) The procedures referred to in clause (iii)(V) shall require the individual who will serve as representative payee to establish, to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Social Security, that—

(I) such individual poses no risk to the beneficiary,

(II) the financial relationship of such individual to the beneficiary poses no substantial conflict of interest, and

(III) no other more suitable representative payee can be found.

(v) In the case of an individual described in paragraph (1)(B), when selecting such individual's representative payee, preference shall be given to—

(I) certified community-based nonprofit social service agencies (as defined in paragraph (10)),

(II) a Federal, State, or local government agency whose mission is to carry out income maintenance, social service, or health care-related activities,

(III) a State or local government agency with fiduciary responsibilities, or

(IV) a designee of an agency (other than of a Federal agency) referred to in the preceding subclauses of this clause, if the Commissioner of Social Security deems it appropriate,

unless the Commissioner of Social Security determines that selection of a family member would be appropriate.

(D)(i) Subject to clause (ii), if the Commissioner of Social Security makes a determination described in the first sentence of paragraph (1) with respect to any individual's benefit and determines that direct payment of the benefit to the individual would cause substantial harm to the individual, the Commissioner of Social Security may defer (in the case of initial entitlement) or suspend (in the case of existing entitlement) direct payment of such benefit to the individual, until such time as the selection of a representative payee is made pursuant to this subsection.

(ii)(I) Except as provided in subclause (II), any deferral or suspension of direct payment of a benefit pursuant to clause (i) shall be for a period of not more than 1 month.

(II) Subclause (I) shall not apply in any case in which the individual is, as of the date of the Commissioner's determination, legally incompetent, under the age of 15 years, or described in paragraph (1)(B).

(iii) Payment pursuant to this subsection of any benefits which are deferred or suspended pending the selection of a representative payee shall be made to the individual or the representative payee as a single sum or over such period of time as the Commissioner of Social Security determines is in the best interest of the individual entitled to such benefits.

(E)(i) Any individual who is dissatisfied with a determination by the Commissioner of Social Security to certify payment of such individual's benefit to a representative payee under paragraph (1) or with the designation of a particular person to serve as representative payee shall be entitled to a hearing by the Commissioner of Social Security to the same extent as is provided in subsection (b), and to judicial review of the Commissioner's final decision as is provided in subsection (g).

(ii) In advance of the certification of payment of an individual's benefit to a representative payee under paragraph (1), the Commissioner of Social Security shall provide written notice of the Commissioner's initial determination to certify such payment. Such notice shall be provided to such individual, except that, if such individual—

- (I) is under the age of 15,
- (II) is an unemancipated minor under the age of 18, or
- (III) is legally incompetent,

then such notice shall be provided solely to the legal guardian or legal representative of such individual.

(iii) Any notice described in clause (ii) shall be clearly written in language that is easily understandable to the reader, shall identify the person to be designated as such individual's representative payee, and shall explain to the reader the right under clause (i) of such individual or of such individual's legal guardian or legal representative—

(I) to appeal a determination that a representative payee is necessary for such individual,

(II) to appeal the designation of a particular person to serve as the representative payee of such individual, and

(III) to review the evidence upon which such designation is based and submit additional evidence.

(3)(A) In any case where payment under this title is made to a person other than the individual entitled to such payment, the Commissioner of Social Security shall establish a system of accountability monitoring whereby such person shall report not less often than annually with respect to the use of such payments. The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish and implement statistically valid procedures for reviewing such reports in order to identify instances in which such persons are not properly using such payments.

(B) Subparagraph (A) shall not apply in any case where the other person to whom such payment is made is a State institution. In such cases, the Commissioner of Social Security shall establish a system of accountability monitoring for institutions in each State.

(C) Subparagraph (A) shall not apply in any case where the individual entitled to such payment is a resident of a Federal institution and the other person to whom such payment is made is the institution.

(D) Notwithstanding subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), the Commissioner of Social Security may require a report at any time from any person receiving payments on behalf of another, if the Commissioner of Social Security has reason to believe that the person receiving such payments is misusing such payments.

(E) In any case in which the person described in subparagraph (A) or (D) receiving payments on behalf of another fails to submit a report required by the Commissioner of Social Security under subparagraph (A) or (D), the Commissioner may, after furnishing notice to such person and the individual entitled to such payment, require that such person appear in person at a field office of the Social Security Administration serving the area in which the individual resides in order to receive such payments.

(F) The Commissioner of Social Security shall maintain a centralized file, which shall be updated periodically and which shall be in a form which will be readily retrievable by each servicing office of the Social Security Administration, of—

- (i) the address and the social security account number (or employer identification number) of each representative payee who is receiving benefit payments pursuant to this subsection, section 807, or section 1631(a)(2), and

(ii) the address and social security account number of each individual for whom each representative payee is reported to be providing services as representative payee pursuant to this subsection, section 807, or section 1631(a)(2).

(G) Each servicing office of the Administration shall maintain a list, which shall be updated periodically, of public agencies and certified community-based nonprofit social service agencies (as defined in paragraph (10)) which are qualified to serve as representative payees pursuant to this subsection or section 807 or 1631(a)(2) and which are located in the area served by such servicing office.

(4)(A)(i) Except as provided in the next sentence, a qualified organization may collect from an individual a monthly fee for expenses (including overhead) incurred by such organization in providing services performed as such individual's representative payee pursuant to this subsection if such fee does not exceed the lesser of—

(I) 10 percent of the monthly benefit involved, or

(II) \$25.00 per month (\$50.00 per month in any case in which the individual is described in paragraph(1)(B)).

A qualified organization may not collect a fee from an individual for any month with respect to which the Commissioner of Social Security or a court of competent jurisdiction has determined that the organization misused all or part of the individual's benefit, and any amount so collected by the qualified organization for such month shall be treated as a misused part of the individual's benefit for purposes of paragraphs (5) and (6). The Commissioner shall adjust annually (after 1995) each dollar amount set forth in subclause (II) under procedures providing for adjustments in the same manner and to the same extent as adjustments are provided for under the procedures used to adjust benefit amounts under section 215(i)(2)(A), except that any amount so adjusted that is not a multiple of \$1.00 shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of \$1.00.

(ii) In the case of an individual who is no longer currently entitled to monthly insurance benefits under this title but to whom all past-due benefits have not been paid, for purposes of clause (i), any amount of such past-due benefits payable in any month shall be treated as a monthly benefit referred to in clause (i)(I).

Any agreement providing for a fee in excess of the amount permitted under this subparagraph shall be void and shall be treated as misuse by such organization of such individual's benefits.

(B) For purposes of this paragraph, the term "qualified organization" means any State or local government agency whose mission is to carry out income maintenance, social service, or health care-related activities, any State or local government agency with fiduciary responsibilities, or any certified community-based nonprofit social service agency (as defined in paragraph (10)), if such agency, in accordance with any applicable regulations of the Commissioner of Social Security—

(i) regularly provides services as the representative payee, pursuant to this subsection or section 807 or 1631(a)(2), concurrently to 5 or more individuals,

(ii) demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Commissioner of Social Security that such agency is not otherwise a creditor of any such individual.

The Commissioner of Social Security shall prescribe regulations under which the Commissioner of Social Security may grant an exception from clause (ii) for any individual on a case-by-case basis if such exception is in the best interests of such individual.

(C) Any qualified organization which knowingly charges or collects, directly or indirectly, any fee in excess of the maximum fee prescribed under subparagraph (A) or makes any agreement, directly or indirectly, to charge or collect any fee in excess of such maximum fee, shall be fined in accordance with title 18, United States Code, or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both.

(5) In cases where the negligent failure of the Commissioner of Social Security to investigate or monitor a representative payee results in misuse of benefits by the representative payee, the Commissioner of Social Security shall certify for payment to the beneficiary or the beneficiary's alternative representative payee an amount equal to such misused benefits. In any case in which a representative payee that—

(A) is not an individual (regardless of whether it is a “qualified organization” within the meaning of paragraph (4)(B)); or

(B) is an individual who, for any month during a period when misuse occurs, serves 15 or more individuals who are beneficiaries under this title, title VIII, title XVI, or any combination of such titles;

misuses all or part of an individual's benefit paid to such representative payee, the Commissioner of Social Security shall certify for payment to the beneficiary or the beneficiary's alternative representative payee an amount equal to the amount of such benefit so misused. The provisions of this paragraph are subject to the limitations of paragraph (7)(B). The Commissioner of Social Security shall make a good faith effort to obtain restitution from the terminated representative payee.

(6)(A) In addition to such other reviews of representative payees as the Commissioner of Social Security may otherwise conduct, the Commissioner shall provide for the periodic onsite review of any person or agency located in the United States that receives the benefits payable under this title (alone or in combination with benefits payable under title VIII or title XVI) to another individual pursuant to the appointment of such person or agency as a representative payee under this subsection, section 807, or section 1631(a)(2) in any case in which—

(i) the representative payee is a person who serves in that capacity with respect to 15 or more such individuals;

(ii) the representative payee is a certified community-based nonprofit social service agency (as defined in paragraph (10) of this subsection or section 1631(a)(2)(I)); or

(iii) the representative payee is an agency (other than an agency described in clause (ii)) that serves in that capacity with respect to 50 or more such individuals.

(B) Within 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Commissioner shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on the results of periodic onsite reviews conducted during the fiscal year pursuant to subparagraph (A) and of any other reviews of representative payees conducted during such fiscal year in connection with benefits under this title. Each such report

shall describe in detail all problems identified in such reviews and any corrective action taken or planned to be taken to correct such problems, and shall include—

- (i) the number of such reviews;
- (ii) the results of such reviews;
- (iii) the number of cases in which the representative payee was changed and why;
- (iv) the number of cases involving the exercise of expedited, targeted oversight of the representative payee by the Commissioner conducted upon receipt of an allegation of misuse of funds, failure to pay a vendor, or a similar irregularity;
- (v) the number of cases discovered in which there was a misuse of funds;
- (vi) how any such cases of misuse of funds were dealt with by the Commissioner;
- (vii) the final disposition of such cases of misuse of funds, including any criminal penalties imposed; and
- (viii) such other information as the Commissioner deems appropriate.

(7)(A) If the Commissioner of Social Security or a court of competent jurisdiction determines that a representative payee that is not a Federal, State, or local government agency has misused all or part of an individual's benefit that was paid to such representative payee under this subsection, the representative payee shall be liable for the amount misused, and such amount (to the extent not repaid by the representative payee) shall be treated as an overpayment of benefits under this title to the representative payee for all purposes of this Act and related laws pertaining to the recovery of such overpayments. Subject to subparagraph (B), upon recovering all or any part of such amount, the Commissioner shall certify an amount equal to the recovered amount for payment to such individual or such individual's alternative representative payee.

(B) The total of the amount certified for payment to such individual or such individual's alternative representative payee under subparagraph (A) and the amount certified for payment under paragraph (5) may not exceed the total benefit amount misused by the representative payee with respect to such individual.

(8) For purposes of this subsection, the term "benefit based on disability" of an individual means a disability insurance benefit of such individual under section 223 or a child's, widow's, or widower's insurance benefit of such individual under section 202 based on such individual's disability.

(9) For purposes of this subsection, misuse of benefits by a representative payee occurs in any case in which the representative payee receives payment under this title for the use and benefit of another person and converts such payment, or any part thereof, to a use other than for the use and benefit of such other person. The Commissioner of Social Security may prescribe by regulation the meaning of the term "use and benefit" for purposes of this paragraph.

(10) For purposes of this subsection, the term "certified community-based nonprofit social service agency" means a community-based nonprofit social service agency which is in compliance with requirements, under regulations which shall be prescribed by the Commissioner, for annual certification to the Commissioner that it

is bonded in accordance with requirements specified by the Commissioner and that it is licensed in each State in which it serves as a representative payee (if licensing is available in the State) in accordance with requirements specified by the Commissioner. Any such annual certification shall include a copy of any independent audit on the agency which may have been performed since the previous certification.

(k) Any payment made after December 31, 1939, under conditions set forth in subsection (j), any payment made before January 1, 1940, to, or on behalf of, a legally incompetent individual, and any payment made after December 31, 1939, to a legally incompetent individual without knowledge by the Commissioner of Social Security of incompetency prior to certification of payment, if otherwise valid under this title, shall be a complete settlement and satisfaction of any claim, right, or interest in and to such payment.

(l) The Commissioner of Social Security is authorized to delegate to any member, officer, or employee of the Social Security Administration designated by him any of the powers conferred upon him by this section, and is authorized to be represented by his own attorneys in any court in any case or proceeding arising under the provisions of subsection (e).

(n) The Commissioner of Social Security may, in the Commissioner's discretion, certify to the Managing Trustee any two or more individuals of the same family for joint payment of the total benefits payable to such individuals for any month, and if one of such individuals dies before a check representing such joint payment is negotiated, payment of the amount of such unnegotiated check to the surviving individual or individuals may be authorized in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of the Treasury; except that appropriate adjustment or recovery shall be made under section 204(a) with respect to so much of the amount of such check as exceeds the amount to which such surviving individual or individuals are entitled under this title for

Crediting of Compensation Under the Railroad Retirement Act

(o) If there is no person who would be entitled, upon application therefor, to an annuity under section 2 of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974, or to a lump sum payment under section 6(b) of such Act, with respect to the death of an employee (as defined in such Act), then, notwithstanding section 210(a)(9) of this Act, compensation (as defined in such Railroad Retirement Act, but excluding compensation attributable as having been paid during any month on account of military service creditable under section 3(i) of such Act if wages are deemed to have been paid to such employee during such month under subsection (a) or (e) of section 217 of this Act) of such employee shall constitute remuneration for employment for purposes of determining (A) entitlement to and the amount of any lump sum death payment under this title on the basis of such employee's wages and self employment income and (B) entitlement to and the amount of any monthly benefit under this title, for the month in which such employee died or for any month thereafter, on the basis of such wages and self employment income. For such purposes, compensation (as so defined) paid in a calendar year before 1978 shall, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, be presumed to have been paid in equal proportions with respect to all

months in the year in which the employee rendered services for such compensation.

Special Rules in Case of Federal Service

(p)(1) With respect to service included as employment under section 210 which is performed in the employ of the United States or in the employ of any instrumentality which is wholly owned by the United States, including service, performed as a member of a uniformed service, to which the provisions of subsection (1)(1) of such section are applicable, and including service, performed as a volunteer or volunteer leader within the meaning of the Peace Corps Act, to which the provisions of section 210(o) are applicable, the Commissioner of Social Security shall not make determinations as to the amounts of remuneration for such service, or the periods in which or for which such remuneration was paid, but shall accept the determinations with respect thereto of the head of the appropriate Federal agency or instrumentality, and of such agents as such head may designate, as evidenced by returns filed in accordance with the provisions of section 3122 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954<FTRF> and certifications made pursuant to this subsection. Such determinations shall be final and conclusive. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to affect the Commissioner's authority to determine under sections 209 and 210 whether any such service constitutes employment, the periods of such employment, and whether remuneration paid for any such service constitutes wages.

(2) The head of any such agency or instrumentality is authorized and directed, upon written request of the Commissioner of Social Security, to make certification to the Commissioner with respect to any matter determinable for the Commissioner of Social Security by such head or his agents under this subsection, which the Commissioner of Social Security finds necessary in administering this title.

(3) The provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be applicable in the case of service performed by a civilian employee, not compensated from funds appropriated by the Congress, in the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, Army and Air Force Motion Picture Service, Navy Exchanges, Marine Corps Exchanges, or other activities, conducted by an instrumentality of the United States subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Defense, at installations of the Department of Defense for the comfort, pleasure, contentment, and mental and physical improvement of personnel of such Department; and for purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2) the Secretary of Defense shall be deemed to be the head of such instrumentality. The provisions of paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be applicable also in the case of service performed by a civilian employee, not compensated from funds appropriated by the Congress, in the Coast Guard Exchanges or other activities, conducted by an instrumentality of the United States subject to the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Homeland Security, at installations of the Coast Guard for the comfort, pleasure, contentment, and mental and physical improvement of personnel of the Coast Guard; and for purposes of paragraphs (1) and (2) the Secretary of Homeland Security shall be deemed to be the head of such instrumentality.

Expedited Benefit Payments

(q)(1) The Commissioner of Social Security shall establish and put into effect procedures under which expedited payment of monthly insurance benefits under this title will, subject to paragraph (4) of this subsection, be made as set forth in paragraphs (2) and (3) of this subsection.

(2) In any case in which—

(A) an individual makes an allegation that a monthly benefit under this title was due him in a particular month but was not paid to him, and

(B) such individual submits a written request for the payment of such benefit—

(i) in the case of an individual who received a regular monthly benefit in the month preceding the month with respect to which such allegation is made, not less than 30 days after the 15th day of the month with respect to which such allegation is made (and in the event that such request is submitted prior to the expiration of such 30-day period, it shall be deemed to have been submitted upon the expiration of such period), and

(ii) in any other case, not less than 90 days after the later of (I) the date on which such benefit is alleged to have been due, or (II) the date on which such individual furnished the last information requested by the Commissioner of Social Security (and such written request will be deemed to be filed on the day on which it was filed, or the ninetieth day after the first day on which the Commissioner of Social Security has evidence that such allegation is true, whichever is later),

the Commissioner of Social Security shall, if he finds that benefits are due, certify such benefits for payment, and payment shall be made within 15 days immediately following the date on which the written request is deemed to have been filed.

(3) In any case in which the Commissioner of Social Security determines that there is evidence, although additional evidence might be required for a final decision, that an allegation described in paragraph (2)(A) is true, he may make a preliminary certification of such benefit for payment even though the 30-day or 90-day periods described in paragraph (2)(B)(i) and (B)(ii) have not elapsed.

(4) Any payment made pursuant to a certification under paragraph (3) of this subsection shall not be considered an incorrect payment for purposes of determining the liability of the certifying or disbursing officer.

(5) For purposes of this subsection, benefits payable under section 228 shall be treated as monthly insurance benefits payable under this title. However, this subsection shall not apply with respect to any benefit for which a check has been negotiated, or with respect to any benefit alleged to be due under either section 223, or section 202 to a wife, husband, or child of an individual entitled to or applying for benefits under section 223, or to a child who has attained age 18 and is under a disability, or to a widow or widower on the basis of being under a disability.

Use of Death Certificates to Correct Program Information

(r)(1) The Commissioner of Social Security shall undertake to establish a program under which—

(A) States (or political subdivisions thereof) voluntarily contract with the Commissioner of Social Security to furnish the Commissioner of Social Security periodically with information (in a form established by the Commissioner of Social Security in consultation with the States) concerning individuals with respect to whom death certificates (or equivalent documents maintained by the States or subdivisions) have been officially filed with them; and

(B) there will be (i) a comparison of such information on such individuals with information on such individuals in the records being used in the administration of this Act, (ii) validation of the results of such comparisons, and (iii) corrections in such records to accurately reflect the status of such individuals.

(2) Each State (or political subdivision thereof) which furnishes the Commissioner of Social Security with information on records of deaths in the State or subdivision under this subsection may be paid by the Commissioner of Social Security from amounts available for administration of this Act the reasonable costs (established by the Commissioner of Social Security in consultations with the States) for transcribing and transmitting such information to the Commissioner of Social Security.

(3) In the case of individuals with respect to whom federally funded benefits are provided by (or through) a Federal or State agency other than under this Act, the Commissioner of Social Security shall to the extent feasible provide such information through a cooperative arrangement with such agency, for ensuring proper payment of those benefits with respect to such individuals if—

(A) under such arrangement the agency provides reimbursement to the Commissioner of Social Security for the reasonable cost of carrying out such arrangement, and

(B) such arrangement does not conflict with the duties of the Commissioner of Social Security under paragraph (1).

(4) The Commissioner of Social Security may enter into similar agreements with States to provide information for their use in programs wholly funded by the States if the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) are met.

(5) The Commissioner of Social Security may use or provide for the use of such records as may be corrected under this section, subject to such safeguards as the Commissioner of Social Security determines are necessary or appropriate to protect the information from unauthorized use or disclosure, for statistical and research activities conducted by Federal and State agencies.

(6) Information furnished to the Commissioner of Social Security under this subsection may not be used for any purpose other than the purpose described in this subsection and is exempt from disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and from the requirements of section 552a of such title.

(7) The Commissioner of Social Security shall include information on the status of the program established under this section and impediments to the effective implementation of the program in the 1984 report required under section 704 of this Act.

(8)(A) The Commissioner of Social Security shall, upon the request of the official responsible for a State driver's license agency pursuant to the Help America Vote Act of 2002—

(i) enter into an agreement with such official for the purpose of verifying applicable information, so long as the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) are met; and

(ii) include in such agreement safeguards to assure the maintenance of the confidentiality of any applicable information disclosed and procedures to permit such agency to use the applicable information for the purpose of maintaining its records.

(B) Information provided pursuant to an agreement under this paragraph shall be provided at such time, in such place, and in such manner as the Commissioner determines appropriate.

(C) The Commissioner shall develop methods to verify the accuracy of information provided by the agency with respect to applications for voter registration, for whom the last 4 digits of a social security number are provided instead of a driver's license number.

(9)(A) The Commissioner of Social Security shall, upon the request of the Secretary or the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services—

(i) enter into an agreement with the Secretary or such Inspector General for the purpose of matching data in the system of records of the Social Security Administration and the system of records of the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(ii) include in such agreement safeguards to assure the maintenance of the confidentiality of any information disclosed.

(B) For purposes of this paragraph, the term "system of records" has the meaning given such term in section 552a(a)(5) of title 5, United States Code.

(D) For purposes of this paragraph—

(i) the term "applicable information" means information regarding whether—

(I) the name (including the first name and any family forename or surname), the date of birth (including the month, day, and year), and social security number of an individual provided to the Commissioner match the information contained in the Commissioner's records, and

(II) such individual is shown on the records of the Commissioner as being deceased; and

(ii) the term "State driver's license agency" means the State agency which issues driver's licenses to individuals within the State and maintains records relating to such licensure.

(E) Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to require the provision of applicable information with regard to a request for a record of an individual if the Commissioner determines there are exceptional circumstances warranting an exception (such as safety of the individual or interference with an investigation).

(F) Applicable information provided by the Commission pursuant to an agreement under this paragraph or by an individual to any agency that has entered into an agreement under this paragraph shall be considered as strictly confidential and shall be used only for the purposes described in this paragraph and for carrying out an agreement under this paragraph. Any officer or employee or

former officer or employee of a State, or any officer or employee or former officer or employee of a contractor of a State who, without the written authority of the Commissioner, publishes or communicates any applicable information in such individual's possession by reason of such employment or position as such an officer, shall be guilty of a felony and upon conviction thereof shall be fined or imprisoned, or both, as described in section 208.

Notice Requirements

(s) The Commissioner of Social Security shall take such actions as are necessary to ensure that any notice to one or more individuals issued pursuant to this title by the Commissioner of Social Security or by a State agency—

(1) is written in simple and clear language, and

(2) includes the address and telephone number of the local office of the Social Security Administration which serves the recipient.

In the case of any such notice which is not generated by a local servicing office, the requirements of paragraph (2) shall be treated as satisfied if such notice includes the address of the local office of the Social Security Administration which services the recipient of the notice and a telephone number through which such office can be reached.

Same-Day Personal Interviews at Field Offices In Cases Where Time Is of The Essence

(t) In any case in which an individual visits a field office of the Social Security Administration and represents during the visit to an officer or employee of the Social Security Administration in the office that the individual's visit is occasioned by—

(1) the receipt of a notice from the Social Security Administration indicating a time limit for response by the individual, or

(2) the theft, loss, or nonreceipt of a benefit payment under this title,

the Commissioner of Social Security shall ensure that the individual is granted a face-to-face interview at the office with an officer or employee of the Social Security Administration before the close of business on the day of the visit.

(u)(1)(A) The Commissioner of Social Security shall immediately redetermine the entitlement of individuals to monthly insurance benefits under this title if there is reason to believe that fraud or similar fault was involved in the application of the individual for such benefits, unless a United States attorney, or equivalent State prosecutor, with jurisdiction over potential or actual related criminal cases, certifies, in writing, that there is a substantial risk that such action by the Commissioner of Social Security with regard to beneficiaries in a particular investigation would jeopardize the criminal prosecution of a person involved in a suspected fraud.

(B) When redetermining the entitlement, or making an initial determination of entitlement, of an individual under this title, the Commissioner of Social Security shall disregard any evidence if there is reason to believe that fraud or similar fault was involved in the providing of such evidence.

(2) For purposes of paragraph (1), similar fault is involved with respect to a determination if—

(A) an incorrect or incomplete statement that is material to the determination is knowingly made; or

(B) information that is material to the determination is knowingly concealed.

(3) If, after redetermining pursuant to this subsection the entitlement of an individual to monthly insurance benefits, the Commissioner of Social Security determines that there is insufficient evidence to support such entitlement, the Commissioner of Social Security may terminate such entitlement and may treat benefits paid on the basis of such insufficient evidence as overpayments.

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