

March 8, 2024

U.S. House of Representatives
Ways and Means, Social Security Subcommittee
1139 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Ferguson, Ranking Member Larson, and Members of the Subcommittee:

The National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR) is a specialized bar association of thousands of attorneys and advocates who represent Social Security disability claimants nationwide throughout the adjudicative process. Given our dedicated practice area, we are uniquely positioned to work with SSA to provide timely and accurate disability decisions.

I am writing to follow up on my testimony provided to your committee on October 26, 2023, in the hearing on "Improving Social Security's Disability Adjudication Process." As you recall, a focus in that hearing was the need for SSA to modernize systems and drop barriers to the assistance provided by representatives.

I have good news.

As you are aware, two months after my testimony, Martin O'Malley was confirmed as the new Commissioner of Social Security. He has rapidly expanded SSA's public-private partnerships while applying existing SSA resources to build modern methods for efficient communication.

Our first example is SSA's sharing of a "list of initial and reconsideration cases."¹

For many years we asked that SSA provide electronic verification of representation. When a representative filed an application on behalf of a claimant or entered on a pending claim, it was extremely difficult to confirm that SSA received and processed the documents. Representatives resorted to calling, writing, and faxing SSA—often repeatedly for months—simply to confirm that initial entry forms had been processed. This was a frustrating waste of resources for both representatives and SSA.

¹ Recently updated educational materials from SSA help representatives understand how to use the list. https://www.ssa.gov/ar/docs/AR_Status_Reports_UserGuide-508.pdf (pages 13-14).

On January 20, 2024, after collaborating and testing with the representative community, SSA launched a “list of initial and reconsideration cases” providing information digitally and securely to representatives. A representative can check the list to confirm that the claimant’s case is correctly associated with the representative. This simple step has already produced significant efficiencies.

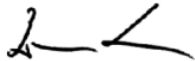
NOSSCR recently surveyed members to estimate the savings produced by this modernization. Extrapolating from these responses to the estimated total savings for SSA, this is our report:

- Monthly reduction in communications to SSA: **42,000 letters or faxes**
- Monthly reduction in telephone calls placed to SSA: **43,000 calls**

Notably, these savings are for SSA and likewise for the representatives—meaning we can help more claimants and provide better service.

Please note this is just a start. We are working with Commissioner O’Malley’s teams to continue this progress. Thank you for your oversight of SSA’s work, and we look forward to working together to advance SSA’s vital mission.

Sincerely,



David Camp
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Commissioner of Social Security Martin O’Malley