

## United States Senate

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6400

(202) 224-5364

November 25, 2019

The Honorable Gail S. Ennis  
Inspector General  
3-ME-5 Meadows East Building  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Inspector General Ennis:

We write to express our concern about the Social Security scam affecting older Americans in Maine and Pennsylvania, and across the country. We are also concerned that this scam affects the Social Security Administration's (SSA) ability to serve the public. For these reasons, we request your office review the SSA's efforts to address the Social Security scam, including steps taken to limit the scam's effect on customer service, and share information about the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) own work to address this scam.

Despite efforts to raise public awareness and limit scammers' ability to spoof the SSA's phone numbers, the Social Security scam perpetrators continue their relentless attempts to defraud the public, including seniors, and steal their personal information. In July 2019, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) announced that the Social Security scam tops the list of most reported scams. The Aging Committee's own Fraud Hotline has also been receiving reports of this scam on a daily basis.

As the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, we are committed to stopping scammers who steal from older Americans and their families. We expect the SSA to share this commitment and take all available steps to protect seniors from this pernicious scam. To better understand the SSA's and OIG's efforts to prevent others from being targeted by this scam, please provide the Committee with answers to the following questions no later than December 16.

1. When did the SSA and the OIG begin efforts to address this scam? What were the initial steps taken?
2. What level of resources, including financial and human capital resources, have the SSA and the OIG committed to addressing and stopping the spread of this scam?
  - a. What is the estimated total cost of the resources committed by both the agency and the OIG to this effort?
  - b. Has the scam had an effect on other workloads? If so, what has been the effect to-date?

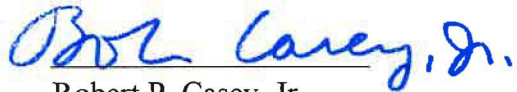
3. What investigative actions has the OIG taken to-date to identify perpetrators of this scam and stem the tide of these scam calls?
4. What other initiatives or approaches has the OIG considered or implemented to address the scam?
5. What other initiatives or approaches do you recommend the SSA consider to address this scam's effects on public trust and on the agency's ability to serve the public?
6. Has the OIG encountered any barriers in its efforts to raise public awareness and disrupt this scam? If so, what, if any, additional legislative authority is needed to address these barriers?

If you have any questions about this request, please do not hesitate to contact us or have your staff contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]. Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to working together to immediately put an end to this ruthless scam.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
Chairman  
Senate Special Committee on Aging



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Senate Special Committee on Aging