JASON SMITH
MISSOURI,
CHAIRMAN

MATT MEYER, STAFF DIRECTOR
(202) 225–3625

RICHARD E. NEAL
MASSACHUSETTS,
RANKING MEMBER

BRANDON CASEY, STAFF DIRECTOR
(202) 225–4021

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
1139 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
Washington, DC 20515

September 18, 2026

The Honorable Frank J. Bisignano
Commissioner
United States Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Bisignano,

We write today to follow up on your June 10, 2026, testimony before the Committee on Ways and Means regarding the Social Security Administration (SSA). Your testimony painted a rosy picture of customer service and staffing; yet in reality, as highlighted by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Council 220 in a statement for the record, this Administration has generated a series of interconnected crises that are undermining Social Security's ability to deliver the benefits the American people have earned. Council 220 is the exclusive representative of approximately 25,000 SSA employees in the national bargaining unit, spanning field offices, Teleservice Centers, workload support units, and other components in every state and territory. Its 33 affiliate Locals represent frontline workers in 1,200 field offices, support units, card centers, and 21 Teleservice Centers nationwide—the employees who answer the phones, process the claims, and serve the public every day.

During the hearing, you testified that you are delivering "the best all-around performance ever at the Social Security Administration." You asserted that SSA has "the right amount of staff in the right places," that you have "reduced workload in field offices by the equivalent of 600 work years, allowing staff to spend more time serving customers, directly." You also stated that "no field office is closed due to staffing" and that "we committed to never close a field office." Finally, you testified that you have also "prioritized workforce engagement," establishing advisory councils that report directly to you, and that you expect these efforts to lead to lower attrition. Unfortunately, the experience on the ground as reported by our constituents and as highlighted by AFGE Council 220 in its statement contradicts this testimony:

- SSA is experiencing the worst staffing crisis in its history. The Administration has forced out more than 8,500 workers or about 1 in 7 SSA employees nationwide – with more than half of staffing losses to front-line customer service employees and other positions crucial to ensuring that people can access their benefits – leaving basic customer service at risk.

- SSA staffing shortages are so severe that AFGE Council 220 has identified 8 field offices as "ghost offices," meaning these offices are so critically understaffed that they have only very limited service capacity.[1]

- Approximately 2,500 SSA field office and support unit employees have been pulled from public service duties and reassigned to answer calls on the national 1-800 number. These employees would otherwise be processing claims, assisting walk-in visitors at field offices, and reducing the transaction backlog in field offices, which reportedly sits at 12 million. AFGE Council 220 reports that with field offices already understaffed and without consistent inter-office triage, this initiative has led to "chaos, repeat callers, and employee attrition."

- SSA employee morale is at an all-time low. In 2025, SSA earned an Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Score of just 15 percent and came in last place among large federal agencies, according to a Partnership for Public Service survey.

In addition, we understand that SSA has canceled telework, flextime scheduling, and credit hour accrual; forced involuntary relocations and details on employees; canceled pending requests for advancements of sick or annual leave across the board regardless of merit; and implemented a new occupancy tracking system that has the potential to trigger procedures for potential field office consolidation or closure, if the new system shows under-occupancy due to understaffing.

The reports by AFGE Council 220 are consistent with reports from our constituents and from organizations such as AARP, which wrote in a recent letter, "Put simply, Americans are unhappy with customer service at SSA." SSA's actions raise serious concerns about your testimony and this Administration's attempt to trample on the rights of unionized employees. Given these concerns, please provide written answers to the following questions by October 2, 2026:

1. When did SSA decide to take the actions described above? Please specify who authorized each action and provide all documentation involving the change in policy.

2. How many SSA workplace policies have been revised, suspended, or eliminated under the Trump Administration? Please provide a full list of workplace policies that have been revised, suspended, or eliminated. For each policy, please identify the date on which the decision to revise, suspend, or eliminate the policy was reached, and, separately, when it was announced. Please also identify the legal authority under which each of these actions was taken, specify who authorized such action, and provide all documentation involving the change in policy.

3. What criteria is SSA using to determine employee relocations, telework eligibility, and access to alternative work schedules?

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[1] The offices are: Ironwood, Michigan; Decorah, Iowa; Havre, Montana; Big Spring, Texas; Sheridan, Wyoming; Glasgow, Montana; Pierre, South Dakota; Cedar City, Utah; and Cody, Wyoming.

4. What steps is SSA taking to ensure that the new occupancy tracking system will not result in closing any field offices?

5. What steps is SSA taking to ensure timely processing of reasonable accommodation and Family and Medical Leave Act requests?

6. What notification does SSA provide to employees and offices when employees are reassigned to teleservice, and what information are they provided about how long the reassignment will last?

We look forward to receiving your response. Thank you, in advance, for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Ranking Member

The Honorable John B. Larson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Social Security

The Honorable Danny K. Davis
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Worker and Family Support