

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 8, 2025

Michelle L. Anderson  
Acting Inspector General  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21235

Acting Inspector General Anderson:

We write in response to your letter dated August 18, 2025, in which the Office of Inspector General (OIG) declines our April 30 request<sup>1</sup> to conduct a full investigation into reports that the Social Security Administration (SSA) placed living noncitizens on the Death Master File (DMF) in an effort to have them “self-deport.” Based on your response, it appears your office did not conduct a thorough and independent review in response to our request. Consequently, we are concerned about the independence of the OIG and its ability to safeguard the Social Security programs and the millions of beneficiaries who rely on them.

In your letter, you write that your office had requested information from SSA regarding reports that it has placed noncitizens who are “lawfully present in the United States; have lawfully obtained Social Security numbers; are authorized to work in the country; and are not known to be deceased” in the DMF. However, based on your response, we are concerned that your “review” was not done thoroughly or independently. Instead, it appears SSA OIG relies primarily on a statement from SSA summarizing its actions and does not address any of our serious due process concerns or concerns related to possible violation of federal laws. In other words, SSA OIG appears to have taken SSA’s word as fact instead of conducting an independent review.

This decision is a stark departure from the office’s history and mission of conducting independent oversight of the Social Security Administration and its programs. As you know, SSA OIG has regularly initiated and completed audits of initiatives and actions that are no longer active.<sup>2</sup> Lessons can still be obtained from investigating an inactive initiative or action as SSA may resume, either in whole or in part, the reviewed action or initiative in the future. Indeed, as

---

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Acting Inspector General Michelle Anderson, Social Security Administration from U.S. Senator Ron Wyden et al. (Apr. 30, 2025),

[https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/043025\\_letter\\_to\\_ssa\\_oig\\_re\\_immigration\\_and\\_dmfpdf.pdf](https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/043025_letter_to_ssa_oig_re_immigration_and_dmfpdf.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, The Social Security Administration’s Administration of the Next Generation Telephony Project Contract, 022324 (Apr. 23, 2025), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/022324.pdf>; Contract with Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory for Analysis of the Social Security Administration’s Disability Process, 062325 (Apr. 17, 2025), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/062325.pdf>; Controls over the Social Security Administration’s National 800-number Service During the COVID-19 Pandemic, A-02-21-51079 (Aug. 29, 2023), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/a-02-21-51079r.pdf>; The COVID-19 Pandemic’s Effect on Disability Determination Services’ Processing of Disability Claims, A-01-20-50963 (Jun. 22, 2023), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/a-01-20-50963.pdf>; The Social Security Administration’s Enumeration Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic, A-15-21-51015 (Sep. 30, 2022), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/a-15-21-51015.pdf>.

your letter acknowledges, after it removed those individuals from the DMF, SSA implemented an alternative approach a few weeks later to manipulate its records *of the same individuals* to achieve the same outcome: rendering their SSNs unusable in an effort to have them self-deport.

Second, instances in which federal laws, regulations, or SSA policies were potentially violated should be investigated, regardless of whether the action or initiative is no longer active. As our letter noted, numerous federal laws may be implicated by this action as well as individuals' due process rights. If federal laws were not followed, or if an individual's constitutional rights were violated due to an agency action, the public needs to know. These instances may result in ongoing harm, regardless of whether an action or initiative is still operative. In such cases, actions that are not thoroughly investigated for their adverse impacts threaten to recur. There is no statute of limitations for an Inspector General to investigate wrongdoing.

Finally, rather than investigating this current, ongoing process, you instead announced a review of incorrectly recorded deaths during the previous administration and excluding the past seven months, during which time the Trump administration used the DMF to effect the “financial death” of SSN-holding immigrants in this country. We agree that the accuracy and reliability of SSA’s death master file is critically important, *which is why we requested the investigation in the first place*. However, this audit seems somewhat duplicative, as OIG already continuously audits death records submitted by federal agencies and States. Since January 2020, OIG audited the death records submitted by the State Department<sup>3</sup>, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services<sup>4</sup>, Puerto Rico<sup>5</sup>, New York City<sup>6</sup>, and 18 states<sup>7</sup>. The timing of this new audit and its

---

3 Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, Match of State Department Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, 062313 (May 31, 2024), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/062313.pdf>.

4 Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, Match of Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-06-18-50653 (Aug. 13, 2021), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-06-18-50653.pdf>.

5 Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, Match of Puerto Rico Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, 022332 (Jan. 18, 2024), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/022332.pdf>.

6 Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, Match of New York City Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, 022333 (Dec. 17, 2024), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/022333.pdf>.

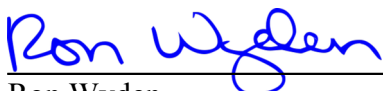
7 Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, Match of Idaho Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, 062410 (Mar. 6, 2025), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/062410.pdf>; Match of Oregon Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, 062307 (Aug. 22, 2023), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/062307mar.pdf>; Match of Alaska Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, 062314 (Aug. 9, 2023), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/062314memorandum.pdf>; Match of Utah Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-06-21-51030 (Sep. 19, 2022), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/a-06-21-51030.pdf>; Match of Utah Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-0618-50706 (Sep. 24, 2021), <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/a-06-18-50706.pdf>; Match of Alabama, Georgia, and Illinois Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-04-19-50819 (Jun. 9, 2021), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-04-19-50819.pdf>; Match of Colorado Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-06-18-50849, (Mar. 19, 2021), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-06-18-50849.pdf>; Match of Louisiana Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-06-18-50907 (Dec. 22, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-06-18-50907.pdf>; Match of Mississippi Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-08-19-50816 (Dec. 11, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-08-19-50816.pdf>; Match of Ohio Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-06-18-50768 (Nov. 24, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-06-18-50768.pdf>; Match of Kentucky Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-04-19-50815

review period raises questions about whether this audit was made due to political considerations rather than independent oversight, especially in light of significant action to unlawfully corrupt the SSA's DMF by this administration warranting immediate and thorough review.

We resubmit our April 30 request for the OIG to investigate SSA's decision to place living individuals on the Death Master File and to review the current process to apply special indicator codes to certain individuals.

We look forward to your prompt response to our request.

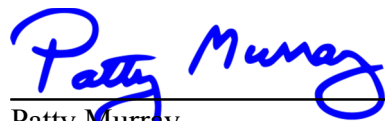
Sincerely,



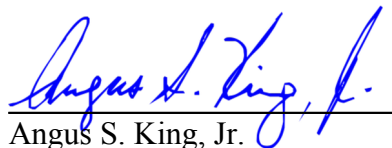
Ron Wyden  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Committee  
on Finance



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

---

(Sep. 15, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-04-19-50815.pdf>; Match of Oklahoma Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-06-18-50769 (Jul. 17, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-06-18-50769.pdf>; Match of Virginia Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-15-18-50680 (Oct. 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/summary/A-15-18-50680Summary.pdf>; Match of New Hampshire and Vermont Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-01-19-50865 (Jun. 22, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-01-19-50865.pdf>; Match of Pennsylvania Death Information Against Social Security Administration Records, A-15-18-50679 (Mar. 23, 2020), <https://oig-files.ssa.gov/audits/full/A-15-18-50679.pdf>.



---

Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



---

Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



---

Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator