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United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

The National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare is concerned about the likely negative impact on Social Security beneficiaries of a plan to assign a significant new workload to the already overburdened Social Security Administration (SSA). H. R. 4088, currently the subject of a discharge petition in the House of Representatives, would create a national employment verification system which would rely on SSA databases and employees to confirm the employment status of every American worker.

As an organization that has worked tirelessly to enhance the financial resources of the Social Security Administration, the National Committee is deeply troubled by the effect this mandatory workload would have on the agency's ability to reduce its current backlog of disability claims; keep up with the impending retirement applications of the Baby Boom generation; and prevent unanswered phone calls and lines at local Social Security offices. Currently, over 750,000 applicants are awaiting a disability hearing. Many have waited as long as two years for a decision. Moreover, this year the first of seventy-eight million Baby Boomers became eligible for Social Security benefits, increasing pressures on SSA's administrative budget. While SSA has been working diligently to meet these demands, it cannot do so if saddled with this new, costly immigration-related function.

The National Committee was dismayed to learn that the proposal would cost SSA more than \$1 billion – nearly 10 percent of its administrative budget – in just the first year of implementation. Even if Congress were to increase SSA's appropriation to help cover the expected costs, recent experience with Medicare Part D enrollment leads us to believe that SSA would not be provided with sufficient resources to handle the massive new workload. SSA is already operating at capacity in many field offices, so it is not clear that increased funding for this new workload would solve the problem.

Recognizing the efforts that Congress has made recently to increase funds for SSA to carry out its core obligations to America's seniors and people with disabilities, and in view of continuing pressures to reduce budgetary expenditures in all areas, we believe that it would be unwise to burden the Social Security Administration with these unrelated duties and further strain its limited administrative budget.

Cordially,

Barbara B. Kennelly
President and CEO