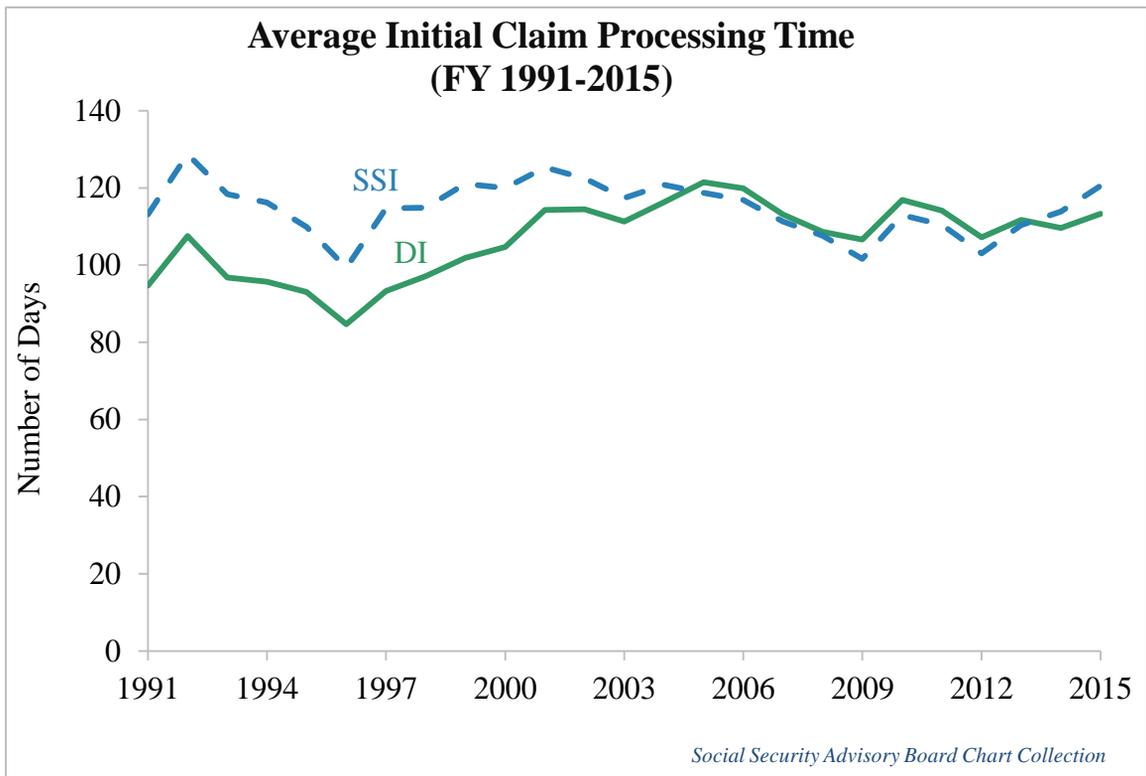


Chapter 10: How long does it take for an applicant to get a decision?

Social Security Advisory Board



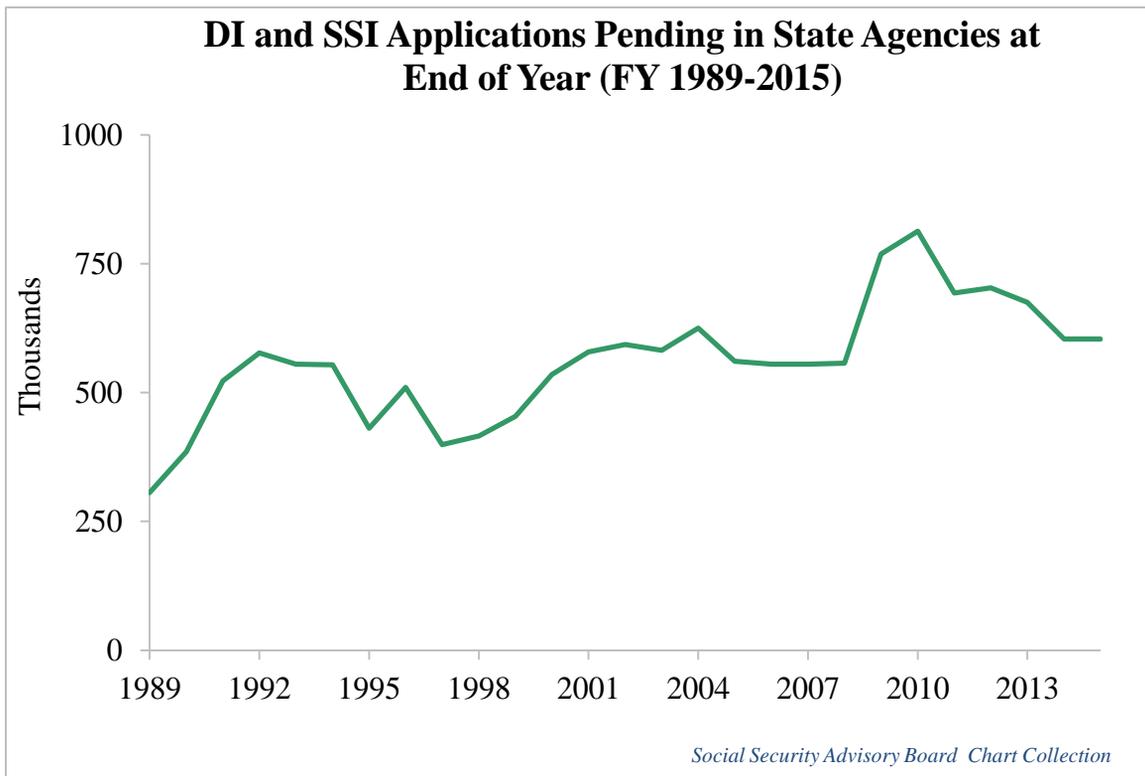
Chart 1. Initial Claim Processing Time for DI and SSI Applications



Processing time shown is the time from the date of the application to the date the award or denial notice is generated. It includes field office, processing center and State agency time. This table reflects processing times only for cases processed by a DDS at the initial adjudicative level and does not include reconsideration or higher appeals. (Data on processing times is not available prior to 1991.)

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Disability Programs, Disability Operational Data Store (DIODS), data last received November 2015.

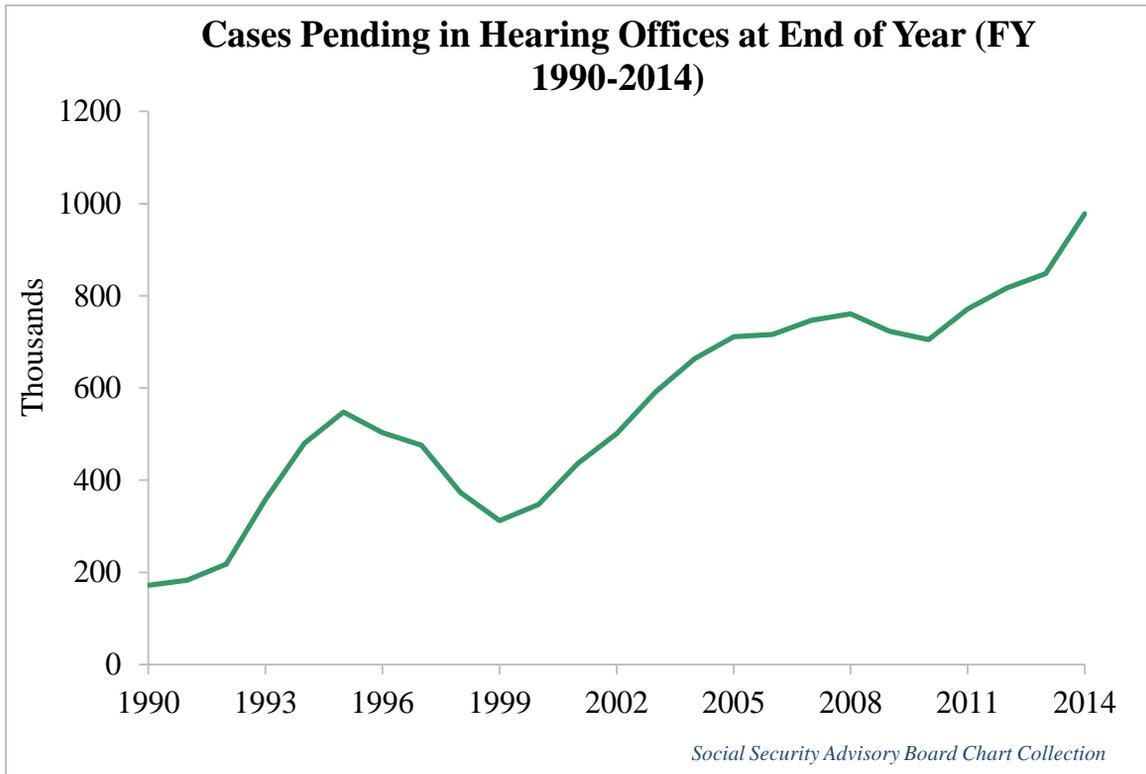
Chart 2: Pending Cases for DI and SSI Applications



The number of claims pending at State agencies soared between 1989 and 1992, largely due to a recession, the Supreme Court’s *Zebley* decision that liberalized the definition of eligibility for children, and changes in SSA’s regulations for determining whether an individual has a disabling mental impairment. Although the pending workload declined briefly in the mid-1990s, it began to grow again in the late 1990s. The spike in the pending workload in 2009 and 2010 reflects the increase in initial claims due to economic conditions.

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Disability Programs, Disability Operational Data Store (DIODS), data last received November 2015.

Chart 3: Processing Times at the Hearing Level

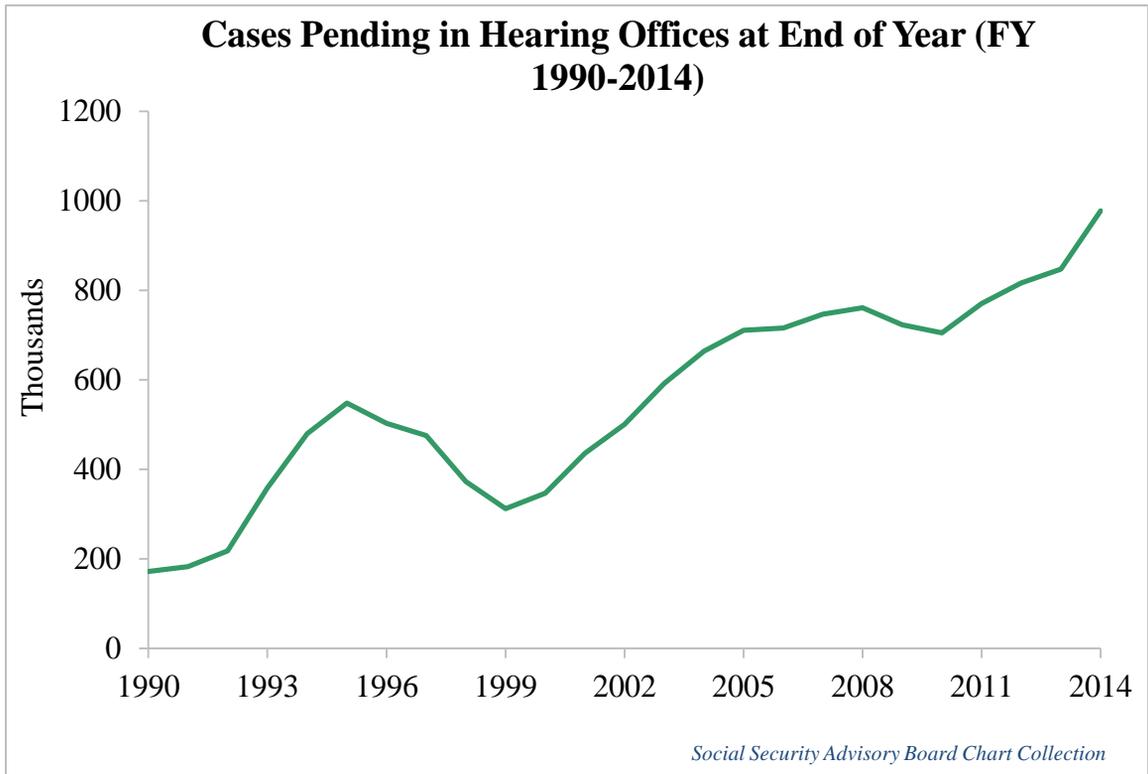


Average hearing office processing times for Social Security and SSI cases (nearly all of which are disability cases) soared in the mid-1990s, as the initial claims filed in the early 1990s made their way through the system. After falling to 274 days in 2000, processing times rose every year before beginning to fall again in 2009. The increase in processing times roughly corresponds to increases in the number of hearing receipts since 2001. In 2013, processing times began to increase again.

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, Case Control System and Case Processing Management System, data last received June 2015.

Note: Fiscal year 2006 and previous years included Medicare cases. Beginning fiscal year 2007, figures include only SSA cases, because Medicare cases were transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Chart 4: Pending Cases at the Hearing Level

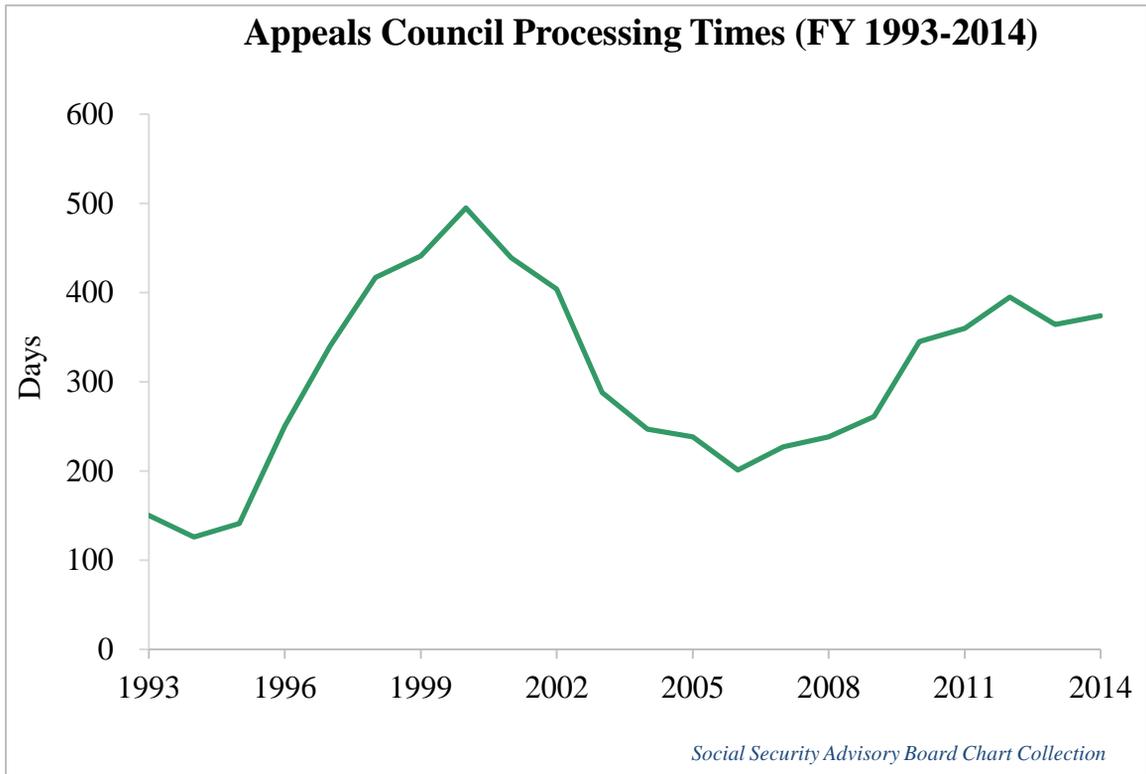


Mirroring the increase in processing times, the size of the pending workload in hearing offices rose steadily from 2000 through 2008 before falling in 2009 and 2010, but began to rise again after 2010. Both processing times and pending levels are substantially higher than they were in the mid-1990s and before.

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, Case Control System and Case Processing Management System, data last received June 2015.

Note: Fiscal year 2006 and previous years included Medicare cases. Beginning fiscal year 2007, figures include only SSA cases, because Medicare cases were transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Chart 5: Processing Time at the Appeals Council Level



Appeals Council processing times have varied greatly over the years, increasing from 150 days in 1993 to close to 500 days by 2000, before falling back down to around 200 days in 2006. In 2012, average processing time at the Appeals Council level was 395 days, its highest level since 2003. In 2014, the average processing time was 374 days (Data on processing times is not available prior to 1993).

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration, Office of Disability Adjudication and Review, Key Workload Indicator Reports for fiscal years 1993-2014, data received June 2015.