



Social Security Advisory Board

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April 6, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Saul
Commissioner of Social Security
Social Security Administration
1500 Woodlawn Drive
Baltimore, MD 21241

Dear Commissioner Saul:

The Social Security Advisory Board (“Board”) recognizes the extraordinary environment that the coronavirus (COVID-19) represents for the American people and the Social Security Administration (SSA) that serves them. We congratulate you for helping to protect the public and its workforce from COVID-19 by authorizing employees to telework. We are writing to urge you to address two other issues.

First, we appreciate your work with the Department of the Treasury (“Treasury”) to facilitate automatic COVID-19 relief payments to all Social Security beneficiaries and their families as required in the recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act (Pub. L. 116-136). We urge you, in addition, to work with Treasury to ensure that those who receive SSI, but not Social Security, also receive relief payments automatically and quickly, without filing any forms.



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Second, we understand SSA has suspended new representative payee monitoring by state Protection and Advocacy (P&A) organizations that is required under the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-165). Those who rely on representative payees are among SSA's most vulnerable beneficiaries, especially during this pandemic. The P&A organizations have assured your staff that they can continue to carry out their work safely, without onsite visits. Unless SSA reverses course, not only will beneficiaries face increased risks, the payee monitoring capabilities of P&A agencies would be significantly compromised by staff losses that will take many months to rectify and restore. We strongly urge you to review this decision and work with the P&As with the goal of maintaining operational capabilities and continuing payee reviews.

Thank you for your leadership during these uncertain times. As the agency continues to develop strategies to cope with the current crisis, the Board stands ready to assist you in any way we can. Please contact me should you have any questions or wish to discuss these issues further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kim Hildred".

Kim Hildred

cc: The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury