

EMPLOYMENT VERIFICATION AND THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
CONCERNS/RESPONSE

CONCERN: Some assert that a mandatory electronic employment verification system would burden the Social Security Administration (SSA) with massive amounts of new responsibilities.

RESPONSE A: The American people have demanded that Congress take action to address the problem of illegal immigration. Immigration experts agree that access to jobs draws aliens to enter and stay illegally in the U.S. Employment verification will prevent unauthorized workers from obtaining jobs and any verification system must rely upon information maintained only by the SSA.

RESPONSE B: It is guaranteed that should Congress mandate employment verification, the SSA will play an important role which cannot be avoided. How these new responsibilities impact SSA will depend on how the system is designed and whether needed funding is provided.

CONCERN: A mandatory employment verification system would damage the SSA's ability to serve the public.

RESPONSE A: The new electronic employment verification system created in the New Employee Verification Act (H.R. 5515), also known as NEVA, may be implemented by the SSA only to the extent that funds are appropriated in advance to cover the agencies full costs. This means that SSA cannot proceed to implement employment verification unless it has full funding in advance.

RESPONSE B: Other provisions in the bill designed to lessen agency impacts include: employment verification is required only for new hires; the system relies on a reporting process already used by 90% of employers for data entry and transmission; accuracy standards are created to help reduce errors and the field office visits that would result; and the SSA is placed in charge to design a system that works best for the agency and the nation.

CONCERN: The SSA has historically been under-funded and continues to lack the resources necessary to perform its primary responsibilities.

RESPONSE: Congress provided the SSA with more than \$150 million above the President's request for FY 2008. Members from both parties are committed to building on this success by providing SSA with the funding needed for the agency to do its job.

CONCERN: Assigning the SSA the task of verifying employment eligibility will only worsen the current backlog crisis, and add to the pressure at field offices across the country.

RESPONSE: To protect the SSA's mission, the NEVA requires advance funding before the agency can begin to implement the system. Further, Commissioner Astrue has already implemented an aggressive plan to reduce the SSA's backlog at hearing offices and Congress has provided additional funds to help ensure the Commissioner's plan is a success.

CONCERN: Social Security databases are filled with errors that affect millions of Americans.

RESPONSE: In a December 2006 report, the SSA's Office of Inspector General estimated that discrepancies in approximately 4.1 percent of agency records could result in incorrect feedback when submitted for employment eligibility verification. The NEVA requires the SSA to put forward a plan that will bring the accuracy rate of the verification system up to 99% and also provides, through advance funding, resources needed to help clean up its databases, thereby increasing the accuracy and efficiency of all vital services the agency provides to the public.