

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

October 9, 2020

Stephen Goss  
Chief Actuary  
Social Security Administration  
6401 Security Blvd.  
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Mr. Goss:

We write to better understand your office's practices involving non-government requests for information or analysis. The Office of the Chief Actuary, as part of the Social Security Administration (SSA), is funded by hard-earned taxpayer dollars as part of the agency's annual appropriation. Some advocates and stakeholders regularly raise concerns about the amount of appropriations the SSA has received and argue to increase the agency's budget to improve service delivery.<sup>1</sup> Given the finite resources available and the important services the SSA provides to Americans, it is essential that the agency's budget is used wisely. For that reason, we are seeking additional information regarding practices of the Office of the Chief Actuary for information, analysis, and/or technical assistance requested by non-government individuals and organizations.

Since 2001, the Office of the Chief Actuary has analyzed proposals from non-government<sup>2</sup> individuals and organizations on at least 14 occasions.<sup>3</sup> In order to better understand your office's practices responding to non-government requests, please provide the following information:

1. When a request is received from a non-government source, how does your office determine if the requested information, analysis, and/or technical assistance will be provided?

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/ssa-needs-more-funding-to-support-essential-services>

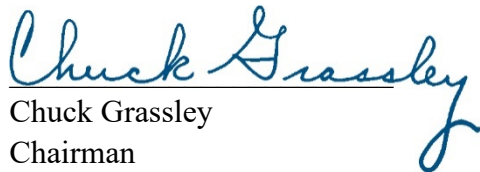
<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this letter, a non-government individual is any individual who is not elected, appointed and Senate-confirmed (or otherwise appointed), or employed by the Executive or Legislative branch. In the case of an individual appointed to a part time role (such as the Social Security Advisory Board or Public Trustee), we differentiate between those requests that were asked as part of official capacity versus other professional or personal interest. In the case of a Commission established by Executive Order (such as the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform), we consider the Commission Members and staff as government requestors during the duration of the Commission. A non-government organization is any group that is not a part of the Executive or Legislative branch, such as a non-profit organization or a commission not created by the Executive or Legislative branch.

<sup>3</sup> See list of published proposals available at <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/solvency/index.html>

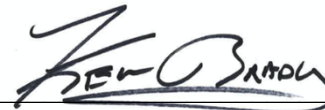
2. When a request is received from a non-government source, does the Commissioner (or Acting Commissioner) of the Social Security Administration approve whether or not to provide the requested information, analysis, and/or technical assistance?
3. Does an Executive (e.g., the Office of Management and Budget) or Legislative (e.g., office of a Representative or a Senator) branch government entity have to make the request on behalf of a non-government individual or organization for the information, analysis, and/or technical assistance to be conducted? If so, is the requesting government office listed in the published memo?
4. Did any of the non-government individuals or organizations who received information, analysis, and/or technical assistance published on your website pay a fee to cover the cost of taxpayer resources used to produce the analysis?
5. Does your office provide information (including responding to oral or written questions) or analysis to non-government individuals or organizations that is not published on the agency's website?
6. Has your office received any requests for information or analysis from non-government individuals or organizations since January 1, 2010 that have not resulted in a memo published on your office's website?
7. Please detail, and provide documentary evidence of, the technical assistance provided by the Office of the Chief Actuary of the SSA for production of the book "*Social Security Works!*," by Nancy J. Altman and Eric R. Kingston (2014, The New Press, New York and London).

We take seriously our oversight responsibility to ensure the SSA is a good steward of taxpayer dollars throughout the agency. We look forward to your prompt reply, and request that you respond by October 23, 2020.

Sincerely,



Chuck Grassley  
Chairman  
Senate Finance Committee



Kevin Brady  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means

cc: The Honorable Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security and Trustee of the Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Trust Funds

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin, Secretary of the Treasury and Managing Trustee of the Old Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Trust Funds