



U. S. Department of Homeland Security

Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act

2019 Annual Report to Congress

August 26, 2019



Homeland
Security

FOREWORD

August 26, 2019

I am pleased to present the third annual report to Congress as required by the *Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017* (“Act”).¹

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has met the requirements of the Act by eliminating all DHS-created documents sent by mail that include a full Social Security number (SSN). In addition, the Department implemented a new privacy policy that requires all approved DHS-created forms containing SSNs that will be mailed through the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to mask, truncate, or redact the SSN, or send the form via a secure method.



Additional details on our broader efforts to reduce the collection and use of the SSN are described in this report.

Please direct any inquiries about this report to the Office of Legislative Affairs at 202-447-5890 or privacy@dhs.gov, or consult our website: www.dhs.gov/privacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jonathan R. Cantor". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jonathan R. Cantor
Chief Privacy Officer, Acting
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

¹ Pub. L. No. 115-59, 131 Stat. 1152 (2017).

Pursuant to congressional notification requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

The Honorable Chuck Grasley
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson
Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Elijah Cummings
Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Richard Neal
Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means



Social Security Fraud Prevention Act of 2017 2019 Report to Congress

Table of Contents

FOREWORD	1
LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE	4
I. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS	5
II. ADDITIONAL EFFORTS TO REDUCE SSN USE	6

LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “*Social Security Number Fraud Prevention Act of 2017*.”²

SEC. 2. RESTRICTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS ON DOCUMENTS SENT BY MAIL.

(a) RESTRICTION.—An agency may not include the social security account number of an individual on any document sent by mail unless the head of the agency determines that the inclusion of the social security account number on the document is necessary.

(b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each CFO Act agency shall issue regulations specifying the circumstances under which inclusion of a social security account number on a document sent by mail is necessary. Such regulations shall include—

- (1) instructions for the partial redaction of social security account numbers where feasible; and
- (2) a requirement that social security account numbers not be visible on the outside of any package sent by mail.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than the first, second, third, fourth, and fifth-year anniversary of such date of enactment, the head of each CFO Act agency shall submit to the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and any other appropriate authorizing committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, a report on the implementation of subsection (a) that includes the following:

- (1) The title and identification number of any document used by the CFO Act agency during the previous year that includes the complete social security account number of an individual.
- (2) For the first report submitted, a plan that describes how the CFO Act agency will comply with the requirements of subsection (a).
- (3) For the final report submitted, the title and identification number of each document used by the CFO Act agency for which the head of the agency has determined, in accordance with regulations issued pursuant to subsection (b), that the inclusion of a social security account number on such document is necessary, and the rationale for such determination.
- (4) For any other report that is not the first or final report submitted, an update on the implementation of the plan described under paragraph (2).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code, but includes an establishment in the legislative or judicial branch of the Government (except the Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Architect of the Capitol, and any activities under the direction of the Architect of the Capitol).

(2) CFO ACT AGENCY.—The term “CFO Act agency” means the agencies listed in paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 901(b) of title 31, United States Code.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any document sent by mail on or after the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Approved September 15, 2017.

² Pub. L. No. 115-59, 131 Stat. 1152 (2017).

I. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Forms Mailed

In last year's report, we reported that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) mailed 69 forms created by the agency that contain Social Security numbers (SSN). All of these forms have now been eliminated.

DHS also mails non-DHS standard forms containing SSNs that pertain to benefits, security, or taxes, that DHS cannot alter or control. The agencies mandating the distribution of these forms are responsible for complying with the requirements of the Act.

DHS is now in compliance with the requirements of the Act.

II. ADDITIONAL EFFORTS TO REDUCE SSN USE

New SSN Reduction Policy

The DHS Chief Privacy Officer chose to exceed the requirements of the Act by issuing DHS Privacy Policy Instruction 047-01-010 [Social Security Number Collection and Use Reduction](#) in June 2019.

This new policy requires that:

1. System owners, *even if their system is properly authorized to collect SSNs*, use an alternative identifier. If there are technological, legal, or regulatory limitations to eliminating the SSN, the DHS Privacy Office requires privacy-enhancing alternatives, such as to mask/truncate the SSN, or block the display of SSNs on paper forms, correspondence, and computer screens. This is also mandated by Office of Management and Budget *Circular Number A-130: Managing Federal Information as a Strategic Resource*.
2. Approved DHS-specific forms containing SSNs that will be mailed through the USPS must have the SSN masked, truncated, or redacted, or be sent via a secure method.

DHS has developed a unique alternative identifier to mask employee and contractor SSNs. The first phase of our SSN Reduction Initiative will focus on implementing this alternative identifier in all applicable DHS human capital systems. Other unique alternative identifiers need to be created to replace SSNs collected from the public. As of June 2019, DHS maintains an inventory of more than 700 programs, systems, and forms that are authorized to collect and use the SSN, including approximately 90 human capital systems.

Progress on our SSN Reduction Initiative will be provided in future reports.