

United States Senate

November 17, 2023

Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi
Acting Commissioner
Social Security Administration
Robert M. Ball Building
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Acting Commissioner Kijakazi:

I have heard from numerous Floridians about the Social Security Administration (SSA) demanding shockingly large sums of money for repayment as a result of past overpayments and errors made by the SSA. These notices have come as a complete surprise to many seniors in my state and, if immediately recouped, would bankrupt an untold number of elderly Floridians.

In both fiscal year 2022 and 2023, about one million Americans received notice they had received too much in their Social Security checks, including thousands of Floridians.¹ These notices follow five years of improper payments by the SSA totaling \$16 billion. This is unacceptable. There must be greater accountability to avoid massive sums of improper payments from creating uncertainty for seniors, many on fixed incomes, who are now being charged with repaying huge sums of money.

Growing up in public housing and to a single mom who had trouble making ends meet, I know how important these programs are for Americans on fixed incomes. My goal is always to make sure we preserve and protect Social Security – which is why I introduced my *Protect Our Seniors Act*² earlier this year. We also need to make sure this is a system that works efficiently and in beneficiaries' and taxpayers' best interests, which is why I've been calling on Congress to constantly scrutinize how every dollar is spent by the federal government and make any changes needed to be efficient and accountable.

¹ <https://oig.ssa.gov/assets/uploads/ssa-oig-semiannual-report-to-congress-spring-2023.pdf>

² <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/2023/2/sen-rick-scott-announces-protect-our-seniors-act-to-preserve-protect-social-security-medicare>

If anyone intentionally defrauded the system or lied to receive payments at other taxpayers' expense, they should absolutely be held accountable and repay this debt to taxpayers. But it's completely wrong for the federal government to go after well-intentioned Americans who did all the right things and trusted that their government was doing the right thing, too.

Hardworking American taxpayers pay into Social Security all of their lives so that they can depend on it in the time they need it most. The fact that the SSA's actions are leaving some of them worse off, through no fault of their own, is absolutely unacceptable.

Too many seniors and disabled Americans on fixed incomes are having issues with the SSA because a mistake on the part of the federal government resulted in an overpayment.

1. Who is being held accountable for the mistakes that the SSA is making in improper and over payments?
2. How is the SSA making it easier for Floridians to report and rectify overpayment or repayment issues?
3. Does the SSA distinguish between overpayments as a result of SSA error, versus overpayments as a result of intentional deceit?
4. In October, you announced a review of Overpayment Procedures and Policies at SSA.³ When will this report be completed and will it be made available to the public?
5. What steps has the SSA taken to identify and address the root causes of these overpayments?

Finally, I urge the SSA to use the tools it already has at its disposal to rectify this situation and to immediately implement outstanding recommendations from the Government Accountability Office⁴ and SSA's Office of Inspector General⁵ to stop improper payments that hurt beneficiaries and taxpayers alike.

³ <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2023/#10-2023-1>

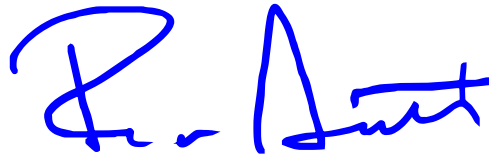
⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-107113>; <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-106466>;

⁵ <https://oig.ssa.gov/major-management-and-performance-challenges/>

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The SSA should be working in the best interests of its beneficiaries and hardworking Americans every single day. I look forward to working with you to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator