

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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April 1, 2025

Mr. Leland Dudek
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Social Security Administration
1300 D Street, SW
Washington, DC 20254

Dear Acting Commissioner Dudek,

I write with grave concern regarding your decision to punish the people of Maine and undermine the integrity of the Social Security Administration in an effort to further the President's personal grievances. On February 27, 2025, you ordered the termination of two contracts between the Social Security Administration and the state of Maine as direct retaliation for statements made by Maine Governor Janet Mills that upset President Donald Trump. Email documentation indicates that you ordered these contracts terminated even though you knew that doing so would increase improper payments and create opportunities for fraudsters. The acting commissioner of the Social Security Administration should serve the American people, not create waste, fraud, and abuse on the taxpayer's dime. I call on you to resign immediately, and I request that you sit for a transcribed interview with staff of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

On February 21, 2025, President Trump publicly threatened to retaliate against the people of Maine after Governor Mills refused to immediately comply with a potentially unlawful executive order. He told Governor Mills: "You'd better do it, because you're not going to get any federal funding at all if you don't."¹ On February 27, 2025, you emailed Social Security Administration staff about Maine's contracts with the Social Security Administration. At 3:30 pm that afternoon, a staff member sent an email warning you, "Terminating the contracts would result in improper payments and potential for identity theft." The staffer promised to "provide more information shortly." At 7:09 pm on the same day, you responded, stating: "Please cancel the contracts. While our improper payments will go up, and fraudsters may compromise identities, no money will go from the public trust to a petulant child."²

On approximately March 5, 2025, the Social Security Administration cancelled two contracts with Maine, terminating Maine's access to a longstanding nationwide policy that

¹ *Trump, Mills Clash Over President's Threat to Withhold Federal Funding at White House Event*, Maine Public (Feb. 22, 2025) (online at www.mainepublic.org/politics/2025-02-21/trump-mills-clash-over-presidents-threat-to-withhold-state-education-funding-at-white-house-event).

² Email from Acting Commissioner Leland Dudek to staff (Feb. 27, 2025) (on file with the Committee).

allows parents to apply for a Social Security number at the hospital after giving birth and allows grieving families to report the deaths of loved ones at funeral homes when applying for death certificates. Families across the country, and particularly in rural areas like many parts of Maine, rely on these programs; approximately 99% of Social Security numbers for infants are assigned after new parents apply at the hospital.³

On March 7, 2025, following public outcry, you issued a public apology and announced that you had “directed that both contracts be immediately reinstated.” You also stated, “In retrospect, I realize that ending these contracts created an undue burden on the people of Maine, which was not the intent.”⁴ In the context of your February 27, 2025, email exchange with staff, portions of your March 7, 2025, apology and statement appear to be a departure from the truth. Based on your emails, it seems that you knew that cancelling these contracts would directly harm the people of Maine, including by enabling identity theft. You have since explained that you cancelled these contracts because you were “ticked” at Governor Mills for her refusal to acquiesce to President Trump’s threats.⁵

The American people deserve answers about your activities and communications in the time between President Trump’s February 21, 2025, public threat to Governor Mills and your February 27, 2025, order to cancel the enumeration at birth and electronic death registration contracts with the state of Maine, and about your knowledge that cancelling these contracts would lead to increased waste, fraud, and abuse.

Please propose convenient dates in April for a transcribed interview with Committee staff. You should know that my invitation to sit for a transcribed interview will stand until the interview occurs—even after your resignation. I also request the following information and documents by April 15, 2025:

1. All of your communications and documents, including but not limited to emails, text messages, call logs, and calendar entries, from February 20, 2025, through March 8, 2025, concerning:
 - a. Governor Janet Mills;
 - b. President Trump’s exchange with Governor Mills on February 21, 2025;

³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *SSA Reverses Newly Imposed Restrictions on Birth and Death Reporting in Maine* (Mar. 7, 2025) (online at www.cbpp.org/blog/ssa-reverses-newly-imposed-restrictions-on-birth-and-death-reporting-in-maine); *Social Security Update: Trump Admin Reverses Major Change in One State*, Newsweek (Mar. 7, 2025) (online at www.newsweek.com/social-security-update-maine-enumeration-birth-2041318).

⁴ Social Security Administration, *Press Release: Statement from Lee Dudek, Acting Commissioner: Correcting Recent Decision Impacting People of Maine* (Mar. 7, 2025) (online at www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2025/#2025-03-07). See also *Maine Babies Will Get Social Security Numbers in Hospital After Trump Admin Directive Condemned*, The Associated Press (Mar. 7, 2025) (online at <https://apnews.com/article/maine-trump-doge-social-security-newborns-70840b39658b8702e6eb9b66f0f920db>).

⁵ *Social Security, Buffeted by Turmoil, Awaits a New Leader*, New York Times (Mar. 24, 2025) (online at www.nytimes.com/2025/03/24/us/politics/frank-bisignano-social-security-upheaval.html).

- c. Any programs or contracts between the Social Security Administration and state or local entities in Maine, including those for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration;
 - d. Your February 27, 2025, order to cancel contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration;
 - e. The possibility that cancelling contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration would lead to increased fraud and more improper payments;
 - f. The decision to reinstate contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration; and
 - g. Your March 7, 2025, statement announcing the Social Security Administration's reinstatement of the contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration.
- 2. All communications and documents between individuals associated with the Social Security Administration and individuals in the Executive Office of the President from February 20, 2025, through March 8, 2025, concerning:
 - a. Governor Janet Mills;
 - b. President Trump's exchange with Governor Mills on February 21, 2025;
 - c. Any programs or contracts between the Social Security Administration and state or local entities in Maine, including those for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration;
 - d. Your February 27, 2025, order to cancel contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration;
 - e. The possibility that cancelling contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration would lead to increased fraud and more improper payments;
 - f. The decision to reinstate contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration; and
 - g. Your March 7, 2025, statement announcing the Social Security Administration's reinstatement of the contracts with Maine allowing for enumeration at birth and electronic death registration.

3. A list of any messaging applications that allow for automatic deletion, such as Signal, that you used to discuss any matters related to the Social Security Administration from February 20, 2025, through March 8, 2025.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact Committee Democratic Staff at (202) 225-5051.

Sincerely,



Gerald E. Connolly
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman