

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 27, 2026

Frank Bisignano
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Bisignano:

We write regarding reports that Social Security Administration (SSA) field offices and resident stations in a handful of states are or have temporarily “closed to the public”¹ due to staffing and operational issues the year after the Trump administration’s reckless cuts to the agency’s workforce.² You vowed to “keep every field office open” and “providing better and higher-quality service.”³ These reported closures, particularly any that are caused by staff shortages, will make it harder for Americans to access their benefits – and call your commitment into question. To help us better understand the ability of Social Security beneficiaries to obtain services at local offices, we ask you to clarify the number of local offices that have been effectively closed or otherwise constricted – and the role staff shortages play in driving any temporary closures to the public.

Multiple Local Offices Reportedly Closed to the Public Due to Staffing Shortages

Since slashing approximately 7,500 agency employees last year, the Trump administration has wreaked havoc at SSA – and Americans have been paying the price.⁴ Under your leadership, Americans are reportedly contending with less accessible services while the agency struggles to

¹ Social Security Administration, “Office Closings and Emergencies,” last accessed May 21, 2026, <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency>.

² Business Insider, “Why some Social Security offices are temporarily closed across the US,” Juliana Kaplan and Allie Kelly, April 23, 2026, <https://www.businessinsider.com/why-social-security-offices-temporarily-closed-across-us-2026-4>; Government Executive, “SSA union fears field offices could shutter under new building occupancy law,” Erich Wagner, April 10, 2026, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2026/04/ssa-union-fears-field-offices-could-shutter-under-new-building-occupancy-law/412784>; Federal News Network, “The Social Security Administration plans to cut field office visits by 50%. What it means for you,” Fatima Hussein, December 5, 2025, <https://federalnewsnetwork.com/workforce/2025/12/the-social-security-administration-plans-to-cut-field-office-visits-by-50-what-it-means-for-you/>.

³ Letter from SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, March 13, 2026, on file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren; Letter from SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, May 20, 2026, on file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren.

⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Trump Administration Personnel Policies Harming Social Security Customer Service, Risk Lasting Damage,” Kathleen Romig and Devin O’Connor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/trump-administration-personnel-policies-harming-social-security-customer>.

fill the staffing gaps left behind.⁵ To address the slew of problems caused by these drastic and shortsighted cuts, you have shifted over 1,500 employees away from staffing field offices and processing benefits to answering the agency's 1-800 hotline⁶ – putting further strain on already understaffed field offices and threatening SSA's ability to process Americans' hard-earned benefits in a timely manner.⁷

In March, we raised concern with how deep staff cuts and haphazard reassignments were bleeding field offices of critical workers,⁸ pointing to the fact that 33 states saw at least a 10 percent reduction in field office staff, with some individual field offices losing “one-quarter or more” of their workforce.⁹ As a result, the median state was left with one field office representative per nearly 4,000 beneficiaries as of August 2025 – a ratio that is 12 percent higher than it was before the cuts – all while the agency continues to face over 100,000 people visiting local field offices every day.¹⁰ With less staff to manage this caseload, customer service has suffered.

In April, reports revealed that “more than a dozen” field offices and resident stations were listed as “closed to in-person service[s]” – directing Americans to instead “reach out by phone or contact the national 800 number” for assistance.¹¹ Many of these offices were reportedly closed to the public due to maintenance needs or other operational issues – which may be a valid reason.¹² But several offices appear to have been effectively closed due to staffing shortages,¹³ and some of these offices have allegedly remained “temporarily closed” for an extended period of time. For example, according to union representatives, local offices in Iowa, West Virginia,

⁵ Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Ron Wyden, Kirsten Gillibrand, et al., to SSA Commissioner Bisignano, March 15, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_warren_senators_to_social_security_admin_on_new_staff_reassignments.pdf.

⁶ Government Executive, “Social Security is directing employees who normally process benefits to answer phones instead,” Natalie Alms and Eric Katz, February 6, 2026, <https://www.govexec.com/workforce/2026/02/socialsecurity-directing-employees-who-normally-process-benefits-answer-phones-instead/411253/>; Center for American Progress, “The Social Security Administration Is Bleeding Staff,” Molly Weston Williamson, January 30, 2026, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-social-security-administration-is-bleeding-staff>.

⁷ Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Ron Wyden, Kirsten Gillibrand, et al., to SSA Commissioner Bisignano, March 15, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_warren_senators_to_social_security_admin_on_new_staff_reassignments.pdf.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Center for American Progress, “The Social Security Administration Is Bleeding Staff,” Molly Weston Williamson, January 30, 2026, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-social-security-administration-is-bleeding-staff>.

¹⁰ Strategic Organizing Center, “Doing Less with Less: How the Trump Administration is Hollowing Out Social Security's Frontline Workforce,” December 2025, p. 3, <https://thesoc.org/resources/doing-less-with-less-how-the-trump-administration-is-hollowing-out-social-securitys-frontline-workforce/>; Urban Institute, “Closing Any Social Security Field Office Would Double the Time It Takes the Average Person to Drive to Their Nearest Office,” Dana Ferrante, January 30, 2026, <https://www.urban.org/stories/mapping-drive-time-to-social-security-field-offices>.

¹¹ Business Insider, “Why some Social Security offices are temporarily closed across the US,” Juliana Kaplan and Allie Kelly, April 23, 2026, <https://www.businessinsider.com/why-social-security-offices-temporarily-closed-across-us-2026-4>.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *Id.*

and Pennsylvania have been “temporarily closed for more than a year, not due to lack of demand but lack of staff.”¹⁴ And, as of July 27, 2026, your agency’s website confirms that offices in Alabama, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are currently offering “no in-person service” and are “only able to provide assistance by telephone until further notice.”¹⁵ Another local office is listed as only offering telephone services, with “limited in-person service [for those] with an appointment.”¹⁶ The effective closures of offices due to staff shortages appear to largely involve small, rural offices, which are “so small that any understaffing forces them to temporarily shut down.”¹⁷

These closures are not unprecedented, and have occurred under previous Republican and Democratic presidents. But in your case, these temporary closures to the public come after you made explicit commitments not to close offices,¹⁸ and have made a series of ongoing staff cuts and assignment changes that appear to have added to the threat of closures.¹⁹

Closing Offices to the Public Hurts Beneficiaries and Raises Questions Regarding Your Promise to Keep Field Offices Open

Field offices and resident stations are a lifeline for the many Americans, particularly seniors and individuals with disabilities, who may lack the technology or skills to “navigate SSA’s online services,” and provide critical in-person assistance when applying for benefits, addressing payment issues, or replacing Social Security cards.²⁰ Consequently, when offices close to the public, even temporarily, it becomes increasingly difficult for Americans to access these in-person services, potentially “delay[ing] benefit claims and changes at a time when many seniors and disabled Americans depend on timely assistance.”²¹ Closing field offices and resident stations for in-person services also means Americans must travel further to get assistance. In fact,

¹⁴ Government Executive, “SSA union fears field offices could shutter under new building occupancy law,” Erich Wagner, April 10, 2026, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2026/04/ssa-union-fears-field-offices-could-shutter-under-new-building-occupancy-law/412784>.

¹⁵ Social Security Administration, “Office Closings and Emergencies,” last accessed July 27, 2026, <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency>.

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Business Insider, “Why some Social Security offices are temporarily closed across the US,” Juliana Kaplan and Allie Kelly, April 23, 2026, <https://www.businessinsider.com/why-social-security-offices-temporarily-closed-across-us-2026-4>.

¹⁸ Letter from SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, May 20, 2026, on file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren; Letter from SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, March 13, 2026, on file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren.

¹⁹ Letter from U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren, Ron Wyden, Kirsten Gillibrand, et al., to SSA Commissioner Bisignano, March 15, 2026, https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letter_from_warren_senators_to_social_security_admin_on_new_staff_reassignments.pdf.

²⁰ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Nearly 2 Million More People Will Need to Visit Social Security Offices Under Revised Policy,” Kathleen Romig, May 2, 2025, <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/nearly-2-million-more-people-will-need-to-visit-social-security-offices-under-revised-policy>; Washington Post, “Democrats urge Social Security Administration to keep field offices open,” Meryl Kornfield, April 24, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2025/04/24/social-security-field-offices-letter>.

²¹ Newsweek, “List of Social Security Offices Temporarily Closed, Facing Disruptions,” Sam Stevenson, April 22, 2026, <https://www.newsweek.com/social-security-offices-temporarily-closed-disruptions-11862242>.

recent analysis finds the closure of any field office would double the time it takes the average American to drive to their second-closest office.²²

Conclusion and Questions

Despite your promise to keep field offices open and always available, field offices and resident stations across the country continue to face disruptions. We are concerned by how closing local offices to the public impacts Americans' ability to access their benefits – and whether these closures cast doubt on your promise²³ to protect field offices. Given our concerns, we ask that you respond to the following questions by August 17, 2026:

1. What is the current average wait time to schedule a field office or resident station appointment? Please provide the following information for each month since January 2025:
 - a. The current average wait time to schedule a field office or resident station appointment per month broken down by state;
 - b. The current average wait time to schedule an in-person field office or resident station appointment per month;
 - c. The current average wait time to schedule a phone field office or resident station appointment per month; and
 - d. The current average wait time to schedule a field office or resident station appointment per month broken down by appointment type (i.e., for disability benefits, retirement benefits, or survivors' benefits).
2. Under what circumstances does SSA consider either a field office or resident station to be closed for in-person services and marks it as “only able to provide assistance by telephone” on their website?²⁴
 - a. Over the past ten years, how many field offices have temporary interruptions in service, to include closures to in-person visits, in an average month? Please separate out months where SSA services were impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.
 - b. Over the past ten years, how many resident stations have temporary interruptions in service, to include closures to in-person visits, in an average month? Please separate out months where SSA services were impacted by the COVID-19 emergency.
3. There are reports that field offices and resident stations in Iowa, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania have been effectively closed for more than a year because of lack of

²² Urban Institute, “Closing Any Social Security Field Office Would Double the Time It Takes the Average Person to Drive to Their Nearest Office,” Dana Ferrante, Jonathan Schwabish, Aaron Williams, et al., January 30, 2026, <https://www.urban.org/stories/mapping-drive-time-to-social-security-field-offices>.

²³ Letter from SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, March 13, 2026, on file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren; Letter from SSA Commissioner Frank Bisignano to U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, May 20, 2026, on file with the Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren.

²⁴ Social Security Administration, “Office Closings and Emergencies,” last accessed June 16, 2026, <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency>.

staffing.²⁵ How many field offices or resident stations have been closed to the public, even temporarily, in the last 12 months?

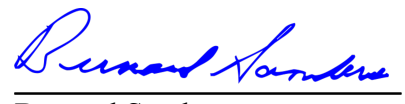
- a. On average over the last 12 months, how long has each such affected field office or resident station been closed to the public?
4. Please provide a complete list of all field office or resident station closures to in-person visits of more than 72 hours, the reason for closure (i.e., maintenance issues, staffing shortages, or any other reason), and the time periods during which the facility was closed.
 - a. For all currently closed offices to in-person visits, what plans do you have in place to reopen these offices to the public, and do those plans include hiring additional employees to staff the offices?
5. For each office listed in response to question (3), please provide the following information about the office:
 - a. The office's location;
 - b. The number of beneficiaries the office serves on a daily basis;
 - c. The number of beneficiaries the office serves on a monthly basis;
 - d. The in-person services currently provided to beneficiaries in the office;
 - e. The in-person services no longer offered to beneficiaries in the office due to temporary closure to the public, and whether these services are now done remotely;
 - f. How many staff are currently employed at the office, and whether they have been reassigned to other duties at the agency, including answering the 1-800 number;
 - g. How many staff the office had on January 1, 2025;
 - h. How many staff the office has currently;
 - i. Whether any staff from the office took voluntary retirement or were laid off;
 - j. The distance to the next closest office; and
 - k. How much farther beneficiaries must travel to receive office services.
6. Since January 2025, how many local offices are operating or were forced to operate with limited in-person services, with fewer hours than they typically offer, or both? Please provide the following information for each office:
 - a. The office's location;
 - b. Whether the office had or has reduced hours, limited in-person services, or both;
 - c. Whether the office was typically open for fewer hours than the average field office or resident station or offered less services than other offices (i.e., not accepting walk-in appointments) prior to reducing hours or limiting services;
 - d. The date the office began operating with reduced hours or limited in-person services, and, if applicable, when it was able to return to normal service;
 - e. The number of beneficiaries the office served or serves on a daily basis;
 - f. The number of beneficiaries the office served or serves on a monthly basis;
 - g. The office's hours of operation as of January 1, 2025;
 - h. The average wait time to receive an appointment at the office;
 - i. The in-person services currently provided to beneficiaries in the office;
 - j. The in-person services no longer offered to beneficiaries in the office due to limitations;

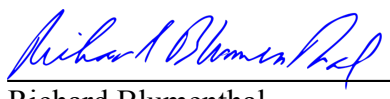
²⁵ Government Executive, "SSA union fears field offices could shutter under new building occupancy law," Erich Wagner, April 10, 2026, <https://www.govexec.com/management/2026/04/ssa-union-fears-field-offices-could-shutter-under-new-building-occupancy-law/412784>.

- k. The office's current hours of operation and the total reduction in hours the office is operating, if applicable;
 - l. The number of staff currently employed at the office, and whether any those staff have been reassigned to other duties at the agency, including answering the 1-800 number;
 - m. The number of staff the office had on January 1, 2025;
 - n. Whether any staff from the office took voluntary retirement or were laid off;
 - o. The distance to the next closest office; and
 - p. How much farther beneficiaries must travel to receive office services.
7. Reports indicate that some offices are stretched so thin that they have to shut down their in-person services early.²⁶ How many field offices or resident stations have shut or are shutting their doors early in the last twelve months?
- a. Please provide the name and location of offices that have ended their in-person services earlier than their scheduled time for all beneficiaries, the time they closed to in-person visitors, the reduction in operating hours this resulted in, and the duration of these periods of early closure.
 - b. Please provide the name and location of offices that have closed early to all but beneficiaries with appointments, the time they closed to in-person visitors without an appointment, the reduction in operating hours this resulted in, and the duration of these periods of early closure.
 - c. Are these early closures either to all visitors or to visitors without an appointment included in the list of closures that SSA maintains on its website?
8. Are there any additional local offices that are at risk of closing to the public, limiting services, or reducing hours, even if temporarily?

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator


Bernard Sanders
United States Senator


Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

²⁶ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Trump Administration Personnel Policies Harming Social Security Customer Service, Risk Lasting Damage," Kathleen Romig and Devin O'Connor, March 23, 2026, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/trump-administration-personnel-policies-harming-social-security-customer>.