

Cosponsor Legislation To Stop Paying Federal Dollars to Dead People

February 23, 2018

Dear Member of Congress:

We urge you to support the bipartisan “Stopping Improper Payments to Deceased People Act” (S. 2374/H.R. 4929).

A major portion of wasteful government spending is a broad category known as “improper payments,” which are payments made in the wrong amount, to the wrong people, or for the wrong reason. Each year, federal improper payments result from insufficient financial accountability, and divert dollars from where they are needed.

One significant cause of improper payments is payments made by federal agencies to individuals who are deceased. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), not all federal agencies have access to the complete list of deceased individuals maintained by the Social Security Administration (SSA). Instead, when checking eligibility for federal payments, many agencies can only use a partial list and so mistakenly pay millions of deceased people. For example, the Department of Agriculture and the Federal Emergency Management Agency can only use the partial list, resulting in improper payments to dead beneficiaries.

The “Stopping Improper Payments to Deceased People Act” follows the GAO’s recommendations to provide agencies with access to the full death list maintained by the SSA. The Act would:

- Grant the SSA authorization to share its complete death data with all relevant federal agencies. Appropriate privacy and security of the data sharing would continue.
- Require steps for improvements to the SSA database of deceased individuals to ensure accuracy and completeness.
- Provide for reviews of agency use of the death data by both the Office of Management and Budget and the GAO.

Thank you for your consideration for this important legislation. For more information, please feel free to contact Peter Tyler of the Project On Government Oversight (ptyler@pogo.org or 202-347-1122).

Sincerely,

American Commitment
Americans for Tax Reform
Coalition to Reduce Spending
FreedomWorks
National Taxpayers Union

Project On Government Oversight
60 Plus Association
Taxpayers for Common Sense
Taxpayers Protection Alliance