

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly
Subcommittee on Government Operations
Committee on Oversight and Reform
United States House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6143

Dear Chairman Connolly:

I am writing in response to your June 15, 2020, letter requesting the Social Security Administration's (SSA) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) examine SSA's plan and procedures to return Federal employees and contractors to Federal office buildings in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

I share your concern for the health and safety of SSA's workforce, which consists of approximately 62,000 Federal employees and 15,000 State employees that serve the public from a network of more than 1,500 offices across the nation and around the world.¹ In Fiscal Year 2019, approximately 173,000 people visited SSA's field offices daily for various reasons, such as to file claims, ask questions, or update their information.²

Although SSA has yet to issue its comprehensive plan and procedures for reopening, the OIG is aware that SSA is carefully working through the complex issues associated with returning employees, contractors, and the public to its offices. Not only does SSA have a large workforce, much of the workforce serves the most vulnerable populations including the elderly, blind, and disabled through the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, Disability Insurance, and Supplemental Security Income programs. SSA must be mindful of not only the health and safety of their workforce but also the public they serve across the many public locations throughout the country.

The OIG is in frequent contact with the agency about considerations pertaining to SSA's plan on reopening its offices, including efforts in procuring personal protective equipment (PPE) for agency personnel, including the OIG, and the public. Once SSA completes its reopening plan and procedures, we will conduct a thorough assessment of the agency's reopening efforts, including whether SSA is employing best practices and existing guidance from both governmental and non-governmental experts, for safe, healthy, and effective office re-openings.

¹ Social Security Administration, Agency Financial Report Fiscal Year 2019, Overview of the Social Security Administration, page 3 (online at <https://www.ssa.gov/finance/2019/Overview%20SSA.pdf>).

² *Id.*

Page 2 - The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly

If you have any further questions, your staff may contact Walter Bayer, Congressional and Intragovernmental Liaison, at (202) 358-6319.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gail S. Ennis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G'.

Gail S. Ennis
Inspector General