# Leadership Council
## of Aging Organizations

*William (Larry) Minnix, Jr., Chair*

June 28, 2011

United States House of Representatives
Judiciary Committee Members
Ways and Means Committee Members
Washington, DC  20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations (LCAO), a coalition of 66 national not-for-profit organizations representing over 60 million older Americans, I am writing to express our grave concern about the negative consequences of expanding the E-Verify program, which would assign new immigration-related workloads to an already overburdened Social Security Administration (SSA). Creating a national employment verification system, using SSA databases and employees, to confirm the employment status of every American worker would divert crucial resources from an already overburdened agency thus impeding its central mission of serving its own beneficiaries.

Our primary concern with proposals to expand the E-Verify program is the high cost imposed on SSA at a time when it is struggling to maintain adequate service delivery, reduce backlogs, and adjust to recent cuts to its already underfunded budget. According to a 2008 Congressional Budget Office report, the cost to SSA of extending and expanding the E-Verify program would be more than $1 billion – nearly 10 percent of the agency's administrative budget – in just the first year of implementation. Over 10 years, the plan would cost over $9 billion. Even though the authors of such legislation have the highest expectations that sufficient appropriations will be provided to cover these costs, recent experience in seeking adequate funding for the agency leads us to believe that Congress will not provide SSA with sufficient resources to handle this massive new workload.

As you are well aware, the Social Security Administration is already facing several significant challenges. Over the last few years, SSA has experienced a dramatic increase in retirement, survivor, disability, and Supplementary Security Income claims. The additional claims receipts are driven by the initial wave of the nearly 80 million baby boomers who will be filing for Social Security benefits by 2030 – an average of 10,000 per day. Concurrently, the recent economic downturn has caused new disability claims to skyrocket. Furthermore, the increased number of claims has imposed a significant strain on SSA field offices charged with processing the additional claims and providing other vital services to the American public.

Currently, the agency is attempting to address the FY 2011 workload demands with FY 2010 resource levels, a reduction in funding for 2011 of about $1 billion. As a consequence of operating at this inadequate funding level, the agency has had to institute a number of cutbacks that further threaten its ability to deliver quality service to the public, including a hiring freeze, termination of most employee overtime, and the indefinite suspension of the mailing of annual earnings and benefits statements to millions of tax payers.

Given the strain on the workload SSA currently faces and the likelihood of continued uncertainty in funding, we are very concerned about the impact of expanding the E-Verify program and accompanying increase in workloads on an already overburdened agency. Any increase in SSA's workload without a comparable increase in funding would further divert SSA from its central mission of serving the elderly, people with disabilities, and workers of all ages who have contributed and earned the right to collect Social Security benefits in a timely manner.

Sincerely,

William L. Minnix, Jr.
Chair