



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

<http://finance.senate.gov>

MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors
Re: GAO report on SSA Electronic Disability Claims Processing
Da: Friday, Oct. 21, 2005

A new Government Accountability Office (GAO) study on the implementation of an electronic disability claims processing system by the Social Security Administration (SSA) concludes SSA has made progress in implementing the system but has encountered operational, productivity, and continuity problems that must be resolved.

The SSA plans to implement a nationwide system that will allow disability claims to be processed electronically, thereby eliminating the need for paper documents. This change is expected to improve the administration of the disability program. The SSA has already begun to certify individual states under the new system and expects to complete its nationwide rollout by January 2007.

Previous work by the GAO recommended end-to-end testing prior to implementation. Today's report suggests such testing could have mitigated the operational problems that have been encountered to date and avoided still others.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, requested the study and provided the following comment on it.

“The decision to fully implement the new system without end-to-end testing was a bold step that may ultimately prove successful. But unless SSA remains diligent, it runs the risk of a costly and time-consuming process of fixing problems that could have been avoided in the first place had it conducted end-to-end testing.”