

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2012

Michael J. Astrue
National Commissioner
Social Security Administration
Windsor Park Building
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235-0001

RE: Request for Moratorium on Consolidation of SSA Field Offices in Seattle, Washington

Dear Commissioner Astrue:

Thank you for your response to my letter dated June 20, 2011 regarding the consolidation of Social Security field offices in my district, in which I expressed serious concerns that the proposed location in the Jackson Federal Building (JFB) may create barriers for the public in accessing services. In your response dated August 1, 2011 you indicated that SSA would monitor accessibility, address any problems that arise, and engage in public education to help citizens obtain acceptable identification to gain entry. I also received a letter dated December 2, 2011, from SSA regional commissioner Stanley C. Friendship, further detailing the agency's plans to ensure access to the more vulnerable and underserved members of the community.

After hearing from my constituents on this matter in recent weeks, I remain concerned about SSA's plans to ensure access to the JFB. I understand that Mr. Friendship recently met with a group of community representatives to discuss the unresolved access issues, and that a community forum of more than 300 community members and SSA officials on this matter took place as well. These constituents have since expressed to me their apprehension that the Agency is not sufficiently prepared to mitigate the anticipated access problems.

Accordingly, I am requesting a moratorium on the closure of these offices and their relocation to the Jackson Federal Building, pending resolution of the access concerns. To that end, I also request that your staff continue to work with the community and my office to find a solution agreeable to both the Agency and the affected beneficiaries.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim McDermott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

JIM McDERMOTT
Member of Congress

CC: Carolyn Colvin, Deputy Commissioner, Social Security Administration
Stanley Friendship, Seattle Area Regional Commissioner, Social Security Administration
George Northcroft, Regional Administrator, General Services Administration