

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Andrew Saul
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Saul:

We write to request information about the Social Security Administration's (SSA's) decision to end the Telework Pilot on November 22, 2019 for all SSA Operations employees, including Field Office, Teleservice Center, and Program Service Center staff.

SSA's Operations component initiated the Telework Pilot in 2013 and has expanded the pilot significantly over the years. Today, roughly one-quarter of SSA Operations staff, or 12,000 employees, telework between one and two days per week.

Federal agencies use telework to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their workforce; to support staff recruitment, retention, and morale; and to mitigate potential disruptions to workplace productivity, such as severe weather. Recognizing these benefits, Congress in 2010 enacted the *Telework Enhancement Act* to guide federal agencies in using telework.

According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), seven in ten federal employees who telework report that it improves their performance and three-quarters report that it increases their desire to stay at their current agency (2018 Federal Work-Life Survey). In a competitive job market where most employers now offer telework, OPM notes that "...the Federal Government must continue to maximize flexible work arrangements to attract and retain top talent if it is to compete with other sectors."

While the SSA Operations Telework Pilot has existed for nearly six years, SSA apparently did not adequately evaluate the pilot and has not articulated its future plans for telework. Management's failure to properly evaluate telework performance metrics while it was in a pilot phase should not be the rationale for suspending telework in its entirety.

Please provide written responses to the following questions:


1. Why did SSA implement the Telework Pilot without a robust plan to evaluate the impact on customer service; productivity; and employee recruitment, retention, and satisfaction?
2. What analysis, evaluation, or metrics did SSA use in making the decision to end the Telework Pilot?

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3. When did SSA first notify employees that it was ending the Telework Pilot, what concerns were raised by affected employees, and how did SSA address these concerns?
4. What specific customer service and performance goals does SSA hope to achieve as a result of ending the Telework Pilot?
5. How does SSA intend to track and measure the impact of ending the Telework Pilot, including progress on the above goals as well as the impact, if any, on customer service; productivity (including mitigation of potential disruptions to in-office work); and employee recruitment, retention, and morale?
6. What process will SSA use to determine future use and evaluation of telework in Operations and by when?

We look forward to receiving your response no later than December 6.

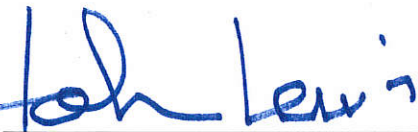
Sincerely,



Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education, and
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations



John B. Larson
Chair
Subcommittee on Social Security
Committee on Ways and Means



John Lewis
Chair
Subcommittee on Oversight
Committee on Ways and Means



Danny K. Davis
Chair
Subcommittee on Worker and Family
Support
Committee on Ways and Means