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Attorney General Brown Joins Brief to Defend Social Security from Erratic and Unlawful Mismanagement

BALTIMORE, MD (April 16, 2025) – Attorney General Anthony G. Brown joined a coalition of 21 states filing an [amicus brief](#) supporting a preliminary injunction to block erratic and unlawful mass layoffs, closing of offices, and dismantling of the Social Security Administration (SSA) by acting administrator Leland Dudek and the Department of Government Efficiency that jeopardize continued payments for millions of Americans. The brief supports the plaintiffs in *American Association of People with Disabilities v. Dudek* and was filed today in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

“DOGE's reckless and dishonest actions have created unprecedented delays and disruptions that threaten the Social Security checks 1.2 million Marylanders—including 375,000 seniors—depend on every month,” **said Attorney General Brown**. “Our elderly neighbors, who rely on these benefits for basic necessities, should not have to endure longer wait times, closed offices, and crashed websites because of the Trump Administration's chaotic dismantling of these essential public services. We're taking action to ensure benefits continue uninterrupted.”

Millions of Americans receive monthly benefits through Social Security retirement, survivor, and disability benefits. As Dudek and DOGE inflict Silicon Valley's move-fast-and-break-things approach, workers have reported utter chaos that has threatened to send the agency into a death spiral. Announcements have been made only to be rolled back days or even hours later. Offices have been slated for closure only to later be removed from lists. Indiscriminate layoffs have been done without regard for how the cuts will impact SSA's ability to provide core services. All the while, Dudek and DOGE have failed to offer any coherent justification for their erratic actions, pointing instead to misinformation about debunked purported fraud, waste, and abuse.

Musk has falsely claimed that SSA pays out \$100 billion annually in improper payments, referring to SSA as a “Ponzi scheme.” Trump has falsely insisted that tens of millions of people over 100 years old were receiving Social Security checks. Both claims are false. Less than 1 percent of total benefits paid between 2015 and 2022 were improper, according to the SSA's Inspector General's Office. Of those improper payments, most were due to mistakes or delays, rather than false information to obtain undeserved benefits. Dudek himself has rejected the notion that deceased people are receiving benefits.

Staff cuts are exacerbating Social Security's problems rather than improving its efficiency. About 2,800 employees have already retired or taken early buyouts promoted by DOGE. SSA and DOGE are planning even further cuts, despite administrative costs only amounting to 0.5 percent of its budget. Having fewer workers has led to longer lines at field offices and longer wait times on phones. In 2025, callers have waited 50 percent longer on hold before speaking to a representative. Online users are faring no better after several website crashes. The Office of Transformation, responsible for managing the website, is in the midst of laying off roughly half of its information technology staff.

For many Americans, Social Security benefits make it possible to meet their most basic needs, including food, shelter, and health care. Further, Social Security is the pathway for eligibility for a number of other vital safety net programs, including Medicaid and Medicare and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance.

In a recent survey by the National Academy of Social Insurance, 42% of individuals aged 65 and older responded that they would not be able to afford food, clothing, or housing if they did not receive their Social Security retirement benefits. Nearly nine out of ten people aged 65 and older were receiving a Social Security benefit as of December 31, 2024. Of those people, approximately 40% received at least half of their income from Social Security. Further, 12% of men and 15% of women rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.

Plaintiffs claim the staffing cuts and reorganization measures have delayed benefits and limited SSA's ability to meet the needs of beneficiaries with disabilities in violation of section 504(a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the First and Fifth Amendments. The brief supports their request for a preliminary injunction. The States' amicus brief highlights the vital functions the SSA performs for millions of Americans and argues that DOGE's cuts have impeded Americans from receiving Medicaid and Medicare coverage, strained state bridge and other benefit programs, and caused chaos, particularly for Americans in rural communities and people with disabilities who may struggle to obtain benefits without access to reliable information and assistance from the SSA.

Joining Attorney General Brown in filing the brief are the attorneys general of, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawai'i, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.

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