



Congressional Action Needed on Social Security Protections for Survivors of Trafficking

Framework of need:

1. Survivors of trafficking in persons especially with diplomatic or criminal syndicate traffickers have an increased need for protections of their identity.
2. Social Security Administration has a process for filing a number change for domestic violence.¹
3. Survivors of Trafficking are being denied this based upon “no imminent threat”.
 - a. Even in cases of a court order mandating protection of identity.

Congressional Mandates:²

- VAWA 2005 defines "personal information" in strong language. 42 USC §11383(a)(18):
 - Individually identifying information for or about an individual including information likely to disclose the location of a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, including—
 - (A) a first and last name;
 - (B) a home or other physical address;
 - (C) contact information (including a postal, e-mail or Internet protocol address, or telephone or facsimile number);
 - (D) a social security number; and
 - (E) any other information, including date of birth, racial or ethnic background, or religious affiliation, that, in combination with any of subparagraphs (A) through (D), would serve to identify any individual.
 - 42 USC § 14043b. Grants may be made for several purposes:
 - (1) to develop or improve protocols, procedures, and policies for the purpose of preventing the release of personally identifying information of victims (such as developing alternative identifiers);
 - (2) to defray the costs of modifying or improving existing databases, registries, and victim notification systems to ensure that personally identifying information of victims is protected from release, unauthorized information sharing and disclosure;
 - (3) to develop confidential, opt out systems that will enable victims of violence to make a single request to keep personally identifying information out of multiple databases, victim notification systems, and registries; or
 - (4) to develop safe uses of technology (such as notice requirements regarding electronic surveillance by government entities), to protect against abuses of technology (such as electronic or GPS stalking) or providing training for law enforcement on high tech electronic crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Congressional Action Requested:

- Request an explanation from SSA on the reason for denial of a new social security number even with a court order of protection.
- Conduct an oversight hearing on the impacts of such denials and how a simple background check for a job merges a legal name change with a denied social security number change placing a survivor of trafficking at risk for private investigators and their trafficker to find them.
- Include language in either the VAWA reauthorization or TVPRA reauthorization that clarifies a survivor can change their social security number to protect their identity from a trafficker.

¹ Social Security Number Change Process for Domestic Violence: <https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10093.pdf>

² Violence Against Women’s Act: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/11>