

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 11, 2018

Ms. Phyllis Smith  
Regional Commissioner  
Social Security Administration  
Regional Public Affairs Office  
600 West Madison Street, Floor 10  
Chicago, Illinois 60661

Dear Commissioner Smith:

Thank you for providing my office with a briefing on the Social Security Administration (SSA)'s plan to close the Milwaukee Mitchell Street Social Security Office later this year. The closure of a federal office that provides direct customer service is a significant event. While I value knowing that all current staff of the Mitchell Street SSA will be transferred to other Milwaukee field office locations and no jobs will be lost, I have concern for any potential disruption in the ability of residents of southside Milwaukee to easily access in-person SSA customer service.

It is my understanding that this was a decision made after weighing many factors, including concerns for crime in the neighborhood and risks to public safety, as well as building maintenance and consistent access to the office that is compliant with the Americans with Disability Act. It goes without saying that public safety, the safety of employees and of SSA customers alike, is of critical importance. However, I am concerned that thousands of people who live in neighborhoods surrounding the Mitchell Street SSA may lose their opportunity to easily access in-person services provided by the current SSA location should it simply be closed.

I urge the SSA to postpone making this decision final until key stakeholders have had an opportunity to understand and address the concerns facing the Mitchell Street SSA office. It would be helpful if you would provide my office with additional information and address the below questions:

- How many people does the Mitchell Street SSA office currently serve each month? Of the people served, how many come into the office in-person compared to being served via phone or internet?
- What is the specific nature of complaints and concerns for safety and security of the Mitchell Street SSA? Have complaints primarily come from SSA staff, customers, or both?
- What actions have been taken to make the current location more safe, secure, and accessible?

- What actions have been taken by the SSA, in cooperation with the General Services Administration (GSA), to find an alternative location for a southside Milwaukee office location?
- Has the SSA/GSA worked with City of Milwaukee or Milwaukee County government leaders to address concerns or identify solutions? And if not, would SSA/GSA be open to such collaboration?

For over 80 years, the Social Security Administration has provided financial protection to our nation's older adults and people with disabilities. The SSA plays a key role in the well-being of our communities and I believe it is of great importance that all citizens have direct access to the services and benefits administered by the SSA. I am eager to work with you to find solutions that ensure that all residents of Milwaukee continue to have direct access to SSA services.

Please stay in touch with my office on these efforts, directing your communication to Tiffany Henry and Mike Helbick in my Milwaukee office at 633 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 1920 -- Milwaukee WI 53203; via phone 414-297-4451; or email [Tiffany\\_Henry@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:Tiffany_Henry@baldwin.senate.gov) or [Mike\\_Helbick@baldwin.senate.gov](mailto:Mike_Helbick@baldwin.senate.gov). Thank you.

Sincerely,

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

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

TB:sba