

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2302

June 10, 2020

The Honorable Russell Vought
Acting Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Acting Director Vought,

I write to you urging the swift implementation of my legislation, the Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019, which became public law on March 2, 2020¹, particularly in light of the enactment of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which has already distributed over \$2 trillion in taxpayer funds.

Unfortunately, there have been substantial reports of improper payments being issued by the IRS and the Treasury since the CARES Act was signed into law. In my office alone, we have heard from numerous constituents who received improper payments. Improper payments can include overpayments, underpayments, payments made to ineligible recipients or payments that were not properly documented.

As you know, improper payments are not a new issue. In fiscal year 2017 alone, your agency estimated that improper payments made by the federal government totaled over \$141 billion. Since 2003, when agencies were first required to begin reporting improper payments, cumulative improper payment estimates across government have totaled \$1.4 trillion.

As trillions of taxpayer dollars flow to Americans in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical for The Payment Integrity Information Act to be swiftly implemented. This law revises and strengthens several existing improper payments statutes with requirements for federal agencies to cut down on improper payments made by the federal government. It is critical for us to make accurate awards and to be transparent about errors we make in order to safeguard taxpayer dollars. With rapidly increasing debt and deficits, we cannot afford to make preventable errors when distributing federal funds.

I strongly encourage OMB to use the CARES Act as an opportunity to carry out the pilot programs authorized in the Payment Integrity Information Act. Additionally, the Payment Integrity Information Act requires OMB to update its plan for improving the death data

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/375/related-bills>

maintained by the Social Security Administration. These efforts are critically important as there have been numerous reports of economic impact payments sent out to deceased persons.²

As you begin implementation of the Payment Integrity Information Act, I ask that you use the CARES Act as an opportunity to improve stewardship of taxpayer dollars through improper payment prevention and reporting. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angie Craig". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

² <https://www.startribune.com/dead-taxpayers-got-relief-checks-can-survivors-keep-them/570291262/>