



September 30, 2008

Mr. Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Suite 900
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Astrue:

I am writing on behalf of my colleagues at the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), 39 of whom serve as the chief election official in their state.

We recently learned that you have scheduled the Social Security Administration's (SSA) annual National Computer Center shutdown for the weekend of October 10-13, 2008. The members of NASS are concerned that this shutdown could seriously impact the ability of the states to conduct their information verification for voter registration as required by the Help America Vote Act of 2002.

State election offices are experiencing record voter registration levels this presidential election year, and traditionally the days and weeks closest to voter registration deadlines are the busiest. Well over half the states have voter registration deadlines that fall a week before, the week of, or the week after the scheduled Computer Center shutdown. Holding all of these verifications until the system comes back online on October 13, 2008 could result in a tremendous surge of data. While the SSA system may be able to handle this surge, the data first goes through the system set up by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA). There is a concern that the AAMVA system and the SSA system must both process this surge of data without problems.

While we understand and appreciate the fact that SSA works all year to schedule this shutdown, we respectfully request that you reconsider the date of this event and look at utilizing another long weekend after the November election – not only this year, but for the years to come. We would also appreciate the opportunity to sit down with you and representatives of AAMVA so that we can discuss this issue in more detail.

Sincerely,

Pedro A. Cortés, NASS President, Pennsylvania Secretary of State

cc: Leslie Reynolds, NASS Executive Director
Neil Schuster, AAMVA President/CEO
Rosemary Rodriguez, Chair, U.S. Election Assistance Commission

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