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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6325

September 23, 2008

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

Dear Commissioner Astrue:

I am writing to request that the Social Security Administration postpone maintenance of the SSN database until after the November 4, 2008 election, so that California and a number of other states will experience no delay in processing new voter registrations.

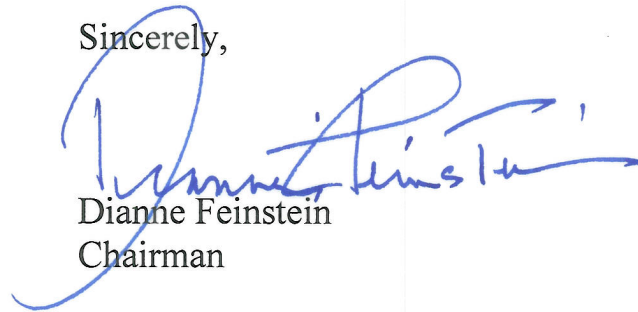
California Secretary of State Debra Bowen recently contacted my office regarding a potential problem that was raised by election officials in our state. Under the Help America Vote Act, in the case of states which are permitted to use the entire or the last four digits of a social security numbers (SSN) for voter registration purposes, each state is required to check the SSN, in whole or in part as provided by the applicant, against the Social Security Administration's database prior to finalizing the registration. If the match isn't done, the individual cannot be placed on the registration list, if prohibited by state law.

I understand that the Social Security Administration is planning to take the SSN database off-line for routine maintenance from Friday, October 10 to Monday, October 13, 2008. While that may be a short length of time, there is concern that this may cause a delay in processing new registrations. The close of voter registration in California is just one week later. Apparently, eleven other states will experience a similar problem.

With millions of newly registered voters, and many more registering to vote every day, state and local election registrars are working seven days a week to get new voters on the list. The days when the SSN database is scheduled to be off-line are critical.

I appreciate any assistance your office can provide so there will be no obstacles to processing new voter registrations for this historic election.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dianne Feinstein
Chairman