

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0803

May 18, 2020

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

Dear Acting Director Vought,

We write to you regarding the implementation of the *Payment Integrity Information Act of 2019*, which became public law on March 2, 2020.^[1] As trillions of taxpayer dollars flow to stakeholders across the country in response to the novel coronavirus, it is critical—now more than ever—for this law to be swiftly implemented. As the primary sponsors of this legislation, we thank you in advance for working with bill sponsors to implement this law that is designed to deter improper payments.

The *Payment Integrity Information Act* revises and strengthens several existing improper payments statutes with requirements for federal agencies in order to cut down on improper payments made by the federal government. Be it over- or under- payments, payments that should not have been made, or payments that weren't properly documented, it is critical for the government to make accurate awards and to be transparent about errors it makes in order to safeguard taxpayer dollars.

The new law allows for OMB to establish one or more pilot programs to test potential accountability mechanisms for compliance with requirements regarding improper payments and the elimination of improper payments. The recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act serves as an excellent opportunity to run such a pilot program.^[2] As the largest relief package in history, it will spend over \$2 trillion, sending much needed payments to individuals and businesses through new programs, one-time-only payments and significant expansions of existing programs. Making so many payments to such a large number of individuals and entities within such a short period of time is a monumental and critically important task for our federal government, but it also provides a timely laboratory for such pilots.

In addition to this requirement, the *Payment Integrity Information Act* also requires OMB to update its plan for improving the death data maintained by the Social Security Administration, to improve federal agency use of death data, and to establish an interagency working group on payment integrity. We believe these efforts are critically important as there have been numerous reports^[3] of economic impact payments sent out to deceased persons.

^[1] S. 375, the Payment Integrity Information Act (Public Law 116-117).

^[2] [H.R. 748](#), the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* (Public Law No. 116-136) was approved unanimously by the Senate on March 25, 2020, then by the House of Representatives on March 27, 2020, and signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020.

^[3] National Public Radio *The IRS Sent Coronavirus Relief Payments to Dead People* May 6, 2020 Accessible at: <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/06/851019441/the-irs-sent-coronavirus-relief-payments-to-dead-people>

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0803

As OMB looks to implement the *Payment Integrity Information Act*, we thank you in advance for taking these thoughts into consideration. While the challenges of mitigating improper payments are great, we are confident that this new law will enhance the ability of the federal government to identify, prevent, and recover improper payments that will ultimately save taxpayers money and, thereby, serve as an important piece of a bigger puzzle to put our nation on a better path to fiscal sustainability.

Sincerely,



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator

cc: President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500
