

DODD, LIEBERMAN, LARSON AGAIN REQUEST THAT BRISTOL SOCIAL SECURITY OFFICE REMAIN OPEN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 1, 2007

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HARTFORD — U.S. Senators Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and U.S. Representative John B. Larson (D-CT) today wrote to newly appointed Social Security Administration Commissioner Michael Astrue requesting reconsideration of a proposal to close the Social Security office in Bristol.

Last year, the Social Security Administration had announced its plan to close the Bristol office by the end of last year and merge its operations with an office in New Britain. Dodd, Lieberman and Larson had protested the closure at that time. Subsequently, the Social Security Administration determined that the Bristol office will remain open beyond the end of the year. In today's letter, the legislators outlined arguments raised during meetings with the community last fall and expresses their continued opposition to the proposed consolidation.

The text of the letter is below:

March 1, 2007

Mr. Michael J. Astrue
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235-0001

RE: Proposed Closing/Consolidation of the Bristol, Connecticut Social Security Office

Dear Commissioner Astrue:

We are writing today to bring this matter to your attention which was under previous review with the former Social Security Commissioner. We respectfully request reconsideration of the proposal to close the Bristol Social Security Office. As you may know, Region I Commissioner Manuel Vaz and Government Relations Director Kurt Czarnowski of the Boston Regional Office visited Bristol on Thursday, October 5, 2006 to explain the proposal. We were on hand to listen to the public's concerns, and were pleased to hear Mr. Vaz emphasize that no final decision had been made on this matter. We are united in our strong objection to this proposal and appreciate this opportunity to express the reasons why.

The Bristol office provides critical services to the 10th largest city in Connecticut and other surrounding towns. Closing this office will pose a major hardship on the residents in this area. There is no denying that thousands of senior citizens and disabled individuals depend on having access to Social Security services in Bristol. It was reported to our offices that during the 2005 fiscal year, the Bristol Social Security Office served over 12,000 individuals. This is a significant number of individuals given the demographics of this area.

We would also like to point out that the elderly population is the fastest growing population in Bristol and surrounding towns. Bristol also has a unique transportation situation. If this office were to close, many of the elderly and disabled residents would be required to rely on public transportation which requires them to transfer buses, or schedule a 3-day pre-arranged bus service for the disabled. Both options pose unreasonable and significant hardships on Bristol area Social Security recipients.

As previously stated, we strongly object to this proposal. We ask that you give our concerns full consideration prior to rendering your final decision. We understand that the Social Security Administration needs to find cost savings and we stand ready to assist you in any way possible in order to prevent the closing of the Bristol Social Security Office.

Sincerely,

Christopher J. Dodd

United States Senator

Joseph I. Lieberman

United States Senator

John B. Larson

Member of Congress

CC: Manuel Vaz, Region 1 Commissioner

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