



## Senator Herb Kohl

United States Senator for Wisconsin



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As many people know, all Social Security beneficiaries must sign up for electronic payments by March 1, 2013. While this should make the system safer, quicker and more convenient it's still very important to protect yourself from potential scams.

Earlier this week I was contacted by a constituent after her monthly direct deposit Social Security check failed to show up in her bank account. It appeared as if someone might have fraudulently obtained her personal information and used it to divert her check into another bank account.

The local Social Security office resolved the issue and the Social Security Office of the Inspector General is investigating the case, but it serves as a reminder to everyone how important it is to protect your personal financial information. Unfortunately, she is not alone in being concerned she was the victim of a Social Security scam. According to the Social Security Administration, there are a number of scams that are used that target people who depend on Social Security benefits.

In one such scam, individuals posing as Social Security employees call and ask for personal information like your name, Social Security number and bank account information. The caller alleges that they need this information to issue additional funds or rebates, or they allege that because of a computer glitch personal information has been lost. Another scam uses an email designed to look like it came from the Social Security Administration to direct readers to a website where people are asked to "update their information" that can then be used by identity thieves and criminals.

And these are just two of the many scams that target Social Security beneficiaries.

When dealing with Social Security, please know that Social Security will never send you an email asking for personal information, such as your Social Security

number, date of birth, or other private information. If someone from Social Security does email you requesting information, don't respond to the message. Instead, contact your local Social Security office or call 1-800-772-1213. You can also report suspicious activity to Social Security Office of the Inspector General Fraud Hotline at 1-800-269-0271 or online at <http://oig.ssa.gov/report-fraud-waste-or-abuse/fraud-waste-and-abuse>.

As Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, I take seriously my responsibility to safeguard the appropriate delivery and receipt of the millions of Social Security checks for the seniors and elderly citizens who are served by the Social Security Administration. I will continue to work to make sure that the system is as safe and secure as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Herb Kohl". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.