

Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security
Floor Statement of Ranking Member Sam Johnson (TX-03)
Introduction of the
“Social Security Privacy and Identity Theft Prevention Act of 2009”
July 23, 2009

Americans are right to worry about the security of their personal information, including their Social Security number, and I don't blame them.

According to the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, data breaches in the public or private sector of personal information in the past 4 ½ years total almost 300 million records.

The fact is that even though Social Security numbers were created to track wages for determining Social Security benefits, these numbers are widely used as personal identifiers.

In fact, in their April 2007 report, the President's Identity Theft Task Force identified the Social Security number as the “most valuable commodity for an identity thief,” and these thieves are working hard.

In a year nearly 10 million people or about 5 percent of adults learn they are victims of identity theft according to the Federal Trade Commission.

Today, I join John Tanner, Chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Social Security, to introduce the “Social Security Number Privacy and Identity Theft Prevention Act of 2009.” This common-sense bill would help stop access to Social Security numbers by restricting their sale, purchase, and public display.

It's time to stop talking and take action to prevent ID theft and protect Americans' privacy. Let's get to work.