

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Senate Finance Hearing to Consider Frank Bisignano to be Commissioner of the Social Security

March 25th, 2025

[\[AUDIO\]](#) | [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to follow on my two colleagues in their questions about the operation. And you know, it's clear, you know, I think a lot of the American people they're very bothered by billionaires taking a shot at their Social Security. And so I just think it sounds out of touch. Secretary Lutnick saying, "Stop payments to find fraud." And then Mr. Musk, who everybody is questioning what his role is anyway, "the big one to eliminate." That's what he was saying on Social Security.

So those are enough, right? Those are enough. But now we have these patterns. Let's go after the staffing. Let's go after the office closures. A new requirement to re-register. The American people are scared to death that you're really going after Social Security. So instead of hiring people like my colleagues are suggesting to improve the service, basically, you're allowing Elon Musk's little DOGE team to go in there and to find fraud.

So, did they find a dead person in Seattle that was getting Social Security? Yes. Here's the article from the Seattle newspaper by Danny Westneat. Oh, wait a minute, he wasn't dead. So not only did my constituent not get his payment in February, they went to his bank account and tried to claw back previous payments from January and December. And then what did he do? He had to go down to the building in Seattle, the federal building that you're trying to close, and stand in line for hours and hours and hours to try to say he wasn't dead and to stop taking his money.

He made an in-person appointment, but it was pushed back 11 days. 11 days ultimately had to wait in line, as I said, which he said, quote, "they are so understaffed down there. They think their office is about to be closed down, and they don't know where they're going to go. It feels like the agency is being gutted," end quote.

So I have to ask you, why are we allowing these people to go in and cause havoc to our constituents instead of hiring people to do the job? So, I have several questions you can just answer, yes or no. Do you think Social Security is a Ponzi scheme?

Bisignano: I've said I believe it's a promise to pay. It's been here for 89 years. It's been one of the truest things we have for our aged and our disabled, and my objective is to continue it and do a great job for the American public.

Sen. Cantwell: Do you think Social Security should be privatized?

Bisignano: I've never heard a word of it, and I've never thought about it.

Sen. Cantwell: Do you think it should be privatized? Yes or no?

Bisignano: I don't believe anybody's thinking about that.

Sen. Cantwell: Do you think Social Security age should be raised?

Bisignano: I'm sorry?

Sen. Cantwell: Other people have suggested in the administration, I think, including the President, and prior that Social Security should be raised.

Bisignano: You know, the Commissioner's job is to ensure that the agency operates correctly. I want to provide all the information required by Senate and by anyone else, in order to make the decisions, but I don't believe I'm a decision maker on any of these items, but I'm happy to provide every piece of information required...

Sen. Cantwell: With this kind of habit going on, my constituents want and deserve answers. Will you commit to opposing any cuts to Social Security benefits?

Bisignano: We have no objective. I have no objective, and I've been told by the President to ensure that we preserve and protect Social Security.

Sen. Cantwell: Okay. Do you believe that you should be hiring enough staff to service people and stop the DOGE people from cutting my constituents off of their well-deserved check?

Now Mr. Lutnick said he doesn't care and it's okay if they miss a payment. I don't know who his mother-in-law is or what kind of support she's got -- but I know my constituent needed that check, and he wasn't dead.

And so the notion that he has to go through these extraordinary efforts, and you guys are encouraging it. I want to know when it's going to stop. When they're going to stop doing that and instead fund, as my Republican colleagues said, the services of Social Security so that these poor seniors can get their checks. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.