



## H.R. 6600 – Medicare Identity Theft Prevention Act of 2008

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 6600 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) on July 24, 2008, and Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX) is the lead co-sponsor. The bill was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, but was never considered.

H.R. 6600 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 27, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

This bill amends the Social Security Act to prohibit including Social Security numbers on Medicare cards. The Secretary of Health and Human Services must reissue cards to individuals which comply with this Act within three years, and individuals may apply for new cards before that date.

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### BACKGROUND

The Department of Health and Human Services often prints individuals' Social Security account number on Medicare cards and related mailings. There is concern that stolen wallets and mail including these cards may lead to identity theft, especially among seniors. The Social Security Administration has supported removing the account numbers from Medicare cards, but Medicare officials estimate that reissuing the cards will cost about \$500 million.

The Federal Trade Commission has listed identity theft as the top consumer complaint. Identity theft is a criminal activity in which individuals' personal data is stolen and utilized for fraud or deception, usually involving unauthorized charges on credit cards or withdrawals from bank accounts. According to the Federal Trade Commission's 2006 Identity Theft Survey Report, approximately 8.3 million Americans were victims of identity theft in 2005. On May 10, 2006, the President established the Task Force on Identity Theft by Executive Order 13402 in order to coordinate the federal government's efforts to combat identity theft.

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### COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has not produced a cost estimate for H.R. 6600 as of September 27, 2008.

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### STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information contact the Adam Hepburn at 6-2302.