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22ND DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3222

December 10, 2004

Jo Anne Barnhart, Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

Dear Commissioner Barnhart:

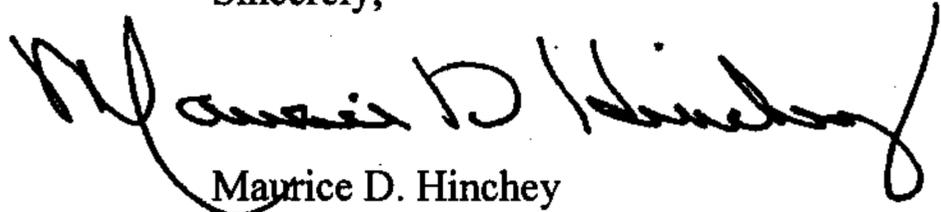
I'm writing to express my concern with the Social Security Administration's decision to refuse recognition of marriage licenses issued in the Town and Village of New Paltz, New York. One of my constituents was recently denied the issuance of a new Social Security card reflecting her change of name after she was recently married in the Town of New Paltz. The Social Security employee that she spoke with at the Kingston Regional office stated that the office was not recognizing any marriage license issued in either the town or the village. While no explanation was given to my constituent as to why this policy is in place, it seems clear to me that it was initiated in response to recent same-sex unions performed in the Village of New Paltz.

This overreaching policy is arbitrarily targeting individuals who have been legally married and could negatively affect their ability comply with statutory requirements of federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service as well as their private insurance companies. Regardless of the initial intent of this policy, it is serving to deny law-abiding citizens access to federal services routinely provided to other Americans. Such action, without due process, denies these citizens their constitutionally mandated equal protection under the law.

I urge the Social Security Administration to immediately rescind this policy and begin recognizing the legal marriage licenses issued in New Paltz. I appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



Maurice D. Hinchey

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