



OFFICE *of* GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

March 20, 2015 — Sent via e-mail

██████████
██████████

Re: Case No.: 201500212
NG: CM: KG

NATIONAL
ARCHIVES
and RECORDS
ADMINISTRATION

8601 ADELPHI ROAD
OGIS
COLLEGE PARK, MD
20740-6001

web: www.ogis.archives.gov
e-mail: ogis@nara.gov
phone: 202-741-5770
toll-free: 1-877-684-6448
fax: 202-741-5769

Dear ██████████:

This responds to your request for assistance from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), which we received on December 10, 2014 via email. Your request for assistance pertains to your records request to Social Security Administration (SSA).

OGIS was created to complement existing FOIA practice and procedure; we strive to work in conjunction with the existing request and appeal process. The goal is for OGIS to allow, whenever practical, the requester to exhaust his or her remedies within the agency, including the appeal process.

OGIS provides mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and Federal agencies. After opening a case, OGIS gathers information from the requester and the agency to learn more about the nature of the dispute. OGIS then decides how and whether to proceed on the request for assistance. Please know that OGIS has no investigatory or enforcement power, nor can we compel an agency to release documents. OGIS serves as the Federal FOIA Ombudsman and our jurisdiction is limited to assisting with the FOIA process.

OGIS staff carefully reviewed the correspondence you submitted with your request for assistance. I understand that you made a request to SSA for the late ██████████ ██████████ Social Security records. The agency denied your request under Exemption 6.

OGIS reached out to the SSA's FOIA Public Liaison, Mary Ann Zimmerman, to learn more about how the agency processed your case. We discussed the agency's assigning multiple tracking numbers to your request, and learned that your request was originally received by the Division of Earning Records Operations (DERO). That office assigned tracking number ██████████ to your FOIA request. Upon review, DERO referred your request to the Office of Privacy and Disclosure (OPD); that office assigned its own tracking number ██████████. Thereafter, OPD inadvertently assigned a second tracking number ██████████ which was a clerical error. Ms. Zimmerman explained that all three numbers are for the same request and apologized for the confusion.



March 20, 2015

Page 2 of 2

Second, we asked Ms. Zimmerman how your FOIA request was processed. She explained that in order to search for and identify records responsive to your request, the agency needs additional information about [REDACTED]. To assist SSA in searching, the agency needs additional information such as [REDACTED] date of birth, place of birth and/or his parents' names. This additional information will help the agency ensure that it does not release information about individuals with names similar to [REDACTED]. This is the reason the agency denied your request under Exemption 6, which protects information from release that would be a "clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." Courts have found that individuals have privacy interests in their names, addresses, date of birth, place of birth and employment history, among other information, and that those privacy interests outweigh public interest in release.

If you have this required information on [REDACTED], you may wish to submit it along with a new FOIA request. However, please note that if [REDACTED] did not apply for a Social Security Number or applied using a different name or birthdate, it is possible that SSA may not have records on him.

I hope you find this information useful in understanding why the SSA denied your request. At this time, there is no further assistance OGIS can offer. Thank you for bringing this matter to OGIS. I will close your case.

Sincerely,

/s/

Nikki Gramian, Acting Director
Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

We appreciate your feedback. Please visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OGIS> to take a brief anonymous survey on the service you received from OGIS.