

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 97

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Federal Government should take all appropriate measures to ensure that citizens continue to be provided with paper-based information, products and services, and public notices while providing, where appropriate, the ability for all citizens to opt-in to electronic delivery if they so choose.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 5, 2013

Mr. DUFFY (for himself and Mr. MICHAUD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Federal Government should take all appropriate measures to ensure that citizens continue to be provided with paper-based information, products and services, and public notices while providing, where appropriate, the ability for all citizens to opt-in to electronic delivery if they so choose.

Whereas the Federal Government has a duty to provide important information about government programs and services in a manner that is accessible to all citizens;

Whereas paper-based information enhances transparency while improving access and citizen participation;

Whereas more than one-third of the United States population lacks broadband access at home;

Whereas according to the Pew Internet Project, 47 percent of people in the United States age 65 and older do not use Internet or E-mail;

Whereas according to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), 8.2 percent of United States households accounting for 17,000,000 adults are unbanked and a further 20.1 percent of households with 51,000,000 adults are underbanked;

Whereas recent surveys by major polling organizations have confirmed that the majority of people in the United States would like to continue receiving paper-based information, products, and services;

Whereas the United States Treasury has ended the sale of paper savings bonds, which can now only be bought online in electronic format, despite the fact that paper bonds comprised \$1,400,000,000 of the \$1,900,000,000 in savings bonds sold during fiscal year 2012;

Whereas the Social Security Administration has eliminated the paper version of the Annual Earnings Statement, an important financial planning tool, and the only one many low-income United States citizens will ever receive;

Whereas the Social Security Administration has announced plans to move virtually all seniors currently receiving Social Security benefit checks through the mail into a direct deposit or debit card method of delivery;

Whereas elderly citizens may be unfamiliar or uneasy with electronic commerce and are particularly susceptible to identity theft and other fraudulent schemes;

Whereas the Social Security Administration receives an average of 50 reports of direct deposit-related fraud each day related to schemes perpetrated on elderly and disabled beneficiaries;

Whereas the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) made the decision to discontinue mailing tax forms to taxpayers still filing by mail in 2010, forcing consumers without Internet access to source these important documents from public libraries or post offices, where availability of tax forms is often inconsistent;

Whereas 20,000,000 returns were submitted on paper in 2010;

Whereas the IRS has also begun issuing tax refunds in the form of prepaid debit cards, which has contributed to a proliferation of violent criminal activity, fraud, and has resulted in a loss to the United States Treasury of \$5,200,000,000 in fraudulent refunds in 2010 alone; and

Whereas the Veterans' Administration has invested \$491,000,000 in a paperless claims system, yet claims taking more than 125 days to process have increased by a factor of three since its introduction: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House of Rep-
2 resentatives that—

3 (1) the Federal Government should take all ap-
4 propriate measures to ensure that citizens continue
5 to be provided with paper-based information, prod-
6 ucts and services, and public notices while providing,

1 where appropriate, the ability for all citizens to opt-
2 in to electronic delivery if they so choose; and

3 (2) decisions by Federal Government agencies
4 regarding the elimination of paper-based informa-
5 tion, products, or services should be subject to over-
6 sight by Congress.

○