



Policy Brief – Paper Advocacy

The Federal Government should ensure constituents have access to paper-based government information and services.

Background

Directives from various Federal agencies have forced electronic delivery of essential government services, including savings bonds, Social Security earnings statements, federal benefits checks, pension information and more. Examples include:

- Food and Drug Administration is seeking to eliminate printed pharmaceutical labeling and prescriber information in favor of digital-only access to prescription drug information.
- In 2015, the IRS eliminated the printed Tax Guide for Individuals, also known as Publication 17. Previously available for free at US Post Offices and in public libraries, this document is now only available online or for purchase for \$10.00 through the Government Publishing Office.
- The Securities and Exchange Commission issued a Proposed Rule that would eliminate the current requirement for mutual fund companies to transmit financial information to investors in paper format. 92 percent of the 965 public comments to the SEC were opposed to this change.
- In January, 2017, the Social Security Administration suspended mailing paper statements to citizens under the age of 60 without any public input. This effectively defaults all citizens under 60 to digital-only access of information.

Industry Position

Paper-based communications are critically important for millions of Americans—especially for seniors and the more than 30 percent of citizens without online access. We can go digital without discriminating against Americans who may not, or cannot, use technology. By getting this right, we will bridge the digital divide and achieve significant efficiency gains—without shifting costs to consumers who can least afford them AND without costing jobs in the printing and paper industry. The common practice of government and private businesses offering “opt out” of paper-based communications allows consumer choice on how to receive communications. It is unnecessary of the government to change this commonly accepted communications practice – especially without a cost-benefit analysis or public input.

115th Congress & White House

The above-mentioned **proposed rules by FDA and SEC should be withdrawn**, and the **IRS and SSA should reverse elimination** of critical tax filing instructions and financial planning documents. Congress should actively oversee agency actions to ensure constituent choice in communications is preserved.