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April 19, 2013

Mr. Michael W. Grochowski
Region 4 Commissioner
Regional Public Affairs Office
Social Security Administration
61 Forsyth St. SW Suite 23T29
Atlanta, GA 30303-8907

Dear Mr. Grochowski:

In recent weeks, my office has received several troubling comments regarding the temporary closure of the Social Security Administration's West Palm Beach office. There have been numerous instances reported to my staff of unnecessarily stressful conditions at some of the neighboring operational offices, seemingly as a result of the extra demands placed on them by the shutdown of the West Palm Beach location. Most importantly, I would like to know when the office is scheduled to be reopened. Beyond that, I am writing to respectfully submit some suggestions brought to my attention that may help mitigate the burden placed on the seniors in my district until the West Palm Beach office is reopened.

First, I am requesting that your office make the closure for renovations of the West Palm Beach location more public in my district. Uninformed citizens traveling to that office arrive to a shuttered building with no answers for where to turn to in the meantime. This creates an unnecessary burden for those who took the time to make the trip to the office. Second, I believe it would be prudent to open a temporary location in West Palm Beach so that there is less of a burden placed on the surrounding offices serving our elderly and disabled beneficiaries. These people are currently traveling additional distances to neighboring operational offices where they face long lines that spill out of waiting rooms, causing them to have to stand for most of their wait. In that vein, offices near West Palm Beach should place temporary seating outside of waiting rooms to address this. A volunteer in Palm Beach County, who has driven multiple seniors and others to the office in Delray Beach, informed my office about a two hour wait outside. That location in particular could benefit from additional seating.

With your help and a simple plan of action, the temporary closure of the West Palm Beach office need not unnecessarily impact my constituents. Furthermore, I trust that you and your staff are working expediently to reopen the West Palm Beach location. Thank you for the work you do to serve our nation's elderly and disabled citizens every day and for your quick attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Patrick E. Murphy
MEMBER OF CONGRESS