

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

November 3, 2022

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro  
Comptroller General  
Government Accountability Office  
441 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro,

We write to respectfully request the Government Accountability Office conduct a study assessing the long-term economic and lifestyle impact of lump sum payments to injured parties resulting from a legal settlement.

For low-income Americans and or disabled individuals, settlement income is depended upon to cover essential costs such as mortgage payments, accident-related medical expenses, and other basic living expenses. We are deeply concerned by historical data showing legal settlements made in the form of lump sum payments to injured parties and their families quickly dissipate, leaving victims without income when they need it most. We are also concerned that claimants choosing between a settlement in the form of a lump sum payment versus a structured settlement lack the appropriate data necessary to make an informed choice and avoid the risk of premature dissipation of funds.

In order to help these individuals make an informed financial decision between a structured settlement and lump sum payment, please focus your analysis on premature dissipation for low-income individuals and disabled individuals who qualify for government aid programs such as Medicaid and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security and other disability benefits.

Additionally, I request GAO's study include an assessment of the long-term impact on mortgage foreclosures, medical debt, and other forms of personal debt. Americans who have been devastated by the type of life-altering event that results in a legal settlement, deserve access to accurate and reliable data to help them make an informed financial decision.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



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Lloyd Smucker  
Member of Congress



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Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.  
Member of Congress