

[Chicago Grandma Forced to Prove She's American to Get Social Security](#) **Citizenship Problems Delay Social Security Payment**

Updated: Friday, 15 Oct 2010, 8:03 AM CDT

Published : Thursday, 14 Oct 2010, 10:00 PM CDT

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Chicago - If you're planning to apply for Social Security any time soon, you could be in for quite a surprise. A government gaffe may be labeling thousands of people ineligible because they're being mistakenly listed as non-citizens.

One Chicagoan is being asked to get documents from around the world to prove she's American.

The Matuseks could be your typical American family, except grandmother Rosemary isn't American -- at least that's what the government claims.

She said a federal foul up that has left her bankrupt, broke and broken hearted.

"I took a lot of pride I worked all those years," Rosemary said. "Now I have to worry about not having any money."

Her troubles began when like so many other people, she got laid off from her job and kicked off unemployment. Then when she applied for social security, she was simply asked for proof of citizenship.

"The only thing I have is my birth certificate stating my father was in the United States Air

Force."

That birth certificate is from Great Britain. Born Rosemarie Ann, Rosemary is what they call a "war child" or "war babe." Her father from Pennsylvania was a sergeant during World War II. Her British mother was stationed at the same base in Essex.

"They got married and my brother was born a year and a couple months later and I was born a year and a half after that in England," Rosemary said.

Like tens of thousands of other children, she moved to the states with her family after the war. Only now, 65 years later, those children are seniors likely to encounter the same red tape Rosemary did when they make an appointment at the Social Security office.

"So she said you have to have some kind of legal proof that you have status to be here in the united states so she said until you do that, I can't process the form for Social Security," Rosemary said.

FOX Chicago News talked to attorney Kyle Kinzey, who has been practicing immigration law for 12 years. He says it's unnecessary that Rosemary be "put through the ringer." He maintains she should be approved because even though she was born overseas, the law clearly states you're American if one of your parents is an American serving in the military; not to mention, when Rosemary's mother was naturalized, Rosemary was a child so she also automatically became a citizen. "The only question is what documents does she have to present to social security so she can get paid," he explained.

We asked the administration that very same question and found Rosemary basically needs to go on a global scavengerhunt for paperwork.

Requirements include a certificate of citizenship from the Dept. of Homeland Security, a British consulate report of birth, and her father's birth certificate to prove he was born in the United States -- since you didn't need to be a citizen to be in the Air Force during World War II.

Or there is one other option Rosemary learned about on her own. She decided to fill out a form through Immigration called an N-600. That process is costly, though, at \$460. For the form to be properly processed, it can take as long as ten months. That means Rosemary may not see her first Social Security check until August 2011.

That's why we asked Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky to get involved. Through careful coordinating between the Immigration Department, State Department, and the Social Security Administration, she tells us she thinks Rosemary will start receiving her payments as early as next month.

"Our impression is once all the papers are in and we think that will be very soon, Social Security has said right away they're going to start sending checks to her, the checks that she deserves as a citizen," Schakowsky said.

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