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**NCOIL STRESSES NEED FOR DEATH MASTER FILE TO FEDERAL REGULATORS**

**Savannah, GA, March 9, 2014**—In a March 7 letter to federal regulators, National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL) President Rep. Greg Wren (AL) reiterated the critical need for continued commercial access to the Social Security Death Master File (DMF). The letter was sent in response to a directive to restrict access to the DMF from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to the Department of Commerce, stemming from the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. As previously expressed in numerous letters to Congress, regular use of the DMF is a vital consumer protection under an NCOIL *Model Unclaimed Life Insurance Benefits Act*.

In his letter, sent to OMB officials, Rep. Wren stressed that “Life insurers need timely and continuous access to the DMF. Without access, it would be impossible for insurance companies to go about their daily business and comply with state regulations, such as those based on the NCOIL model, as well as global unclaimed property and insurance settlements.”

Rep. Wren wrote that he was encouraged to learn that OMB is supportive of an interim certification process for commercial users of the DMF while a final certification process is developed. He expressed his hope that OMB and the Commerce Department’s National Technical Information Service (NTIS) “will recognize that continued access to the DMF on the part of life insurers is an essential consumer protection in a growing number of states.”

The NCOIL model, adopted in 2011, requires life insurers to check in-force policies against the DMF on at least a semi-annual basis in order to identify policies for which death benefits are owed. In the event that beneficiaries cannot be located, the model allows for escheatment of benefits states in accordance with unclaimed property laws.

Since adoption, the model has been enacted in nine states—Alabama, Kentucky, Maryland, Montana, New Mexico, New York, Nevada, North Dakota, and Vermont—and is pending in nine additional states.

NCOIL is an organization of state legislators whose main area of public policy interest is insurance legislation and regulation. Most legislators active in NCOIL either chair or are members of the committees responsible for insurance legislation in their respective state houses across the country. More information is available at [www.ncoil.org](http://www.ncoil.org).

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