For the more than 5 million consumers who still collect their Social Security by check, February is a crucial month for them. In order to save tax payers id="mce_marker" billion over 10 years and mitigate Social Security fraud, the government has informed these participants that they need to sign up for direct deposit or the Direct Express debit card by March 1, 2013.

The only participants exempt are those who were born on or before May, 1921.

Although it’s hard for many people to change their ways, it’s important for them to know there are benefits by choosing either direct deposit or the government debit card.

**Direct Deposit Benefits**

Direct Deposit is a free service that automatically deposits recurring income received into any checking or savings account chosen by the customer.

It’s convenient. Your money is deposited automatically into your checking or savings account, even when you are too busy to get to the bank.

It’s fast. You have same–day access to your money on the day of deposit.

It’s safe. Never worry about checks getting lost, delayed, or stolen.

Checking accounts are also a great value for consumers: they offer convenience, and multiple ways to access/manage their money and security. In many cases, having direct deposit is one way to waive a monthly service fee on a checking account.

**Government Debit Card Benefits**

The government card is a prepaid debit card payment option. Cardholders can make purchases, pay bills and get cash back at thousands of locations nationwide. There are no sign-up fees or monthly account fees. Consumers can use their card to make purchases, to pay bills, and get cash from an ATM or financial institution.

Switching from checks is fast, easy, convenient, safe and most importantly – its free. Consumers can go to www.GoDirect.org, call the U.S. Treasury Electronic Payment Solution Center’s toll-free helpline at 1-800-333-1795 or simply visit with a local banker.