

Social Security Card In 1st Grade Sought

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WASHINGTON, March 2 — The Senate Finance Committee voted today to require that every child be issued a Social Security card upon entering the first grade.

The committee also voted to require issuance of Social Security cards to immigrants upon legal entry into this country and to all welfare applicants who do not have such cards.

Anyone who applied for a Social Security number at any other time of his life would be closely questioned, under the committee's provision.

Senator Russell B. Long of Louisiana, chairman of the committee, explained later that the committee had voted to require assignment of Social Security numbers to these three groups to "prevent abuse."

Senator Long has reported

Continued on Page 39, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5

finding cases in which persons on welfare have obtained five or more welfare checks monthly by applying under different names and furnishing Social Security cards issued in those names.

By seeking to make the Social Security card the universal method of identification, the committee said that this would give a closer check on preventing issuance of more than one number to a person.

The committee action could prove highly controversial, particularly among critics of Government invasion of privacy.

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, has frequently expressed concern about the apparent trend toward use of a single identification number which, when fed into a computer, could produce a vast amount of information about a given citizen.

The requirement for assignment of Social Security numbers to first-graders would be effective Jan. 1, 1974. For legal aliens and welfare applicants, it would be effective upon enactment of the law.

The proposal was written by the committee into pending legislation to increase Social Security benefits and reform the welfare system. Final committee action on the full bill is not expected for several weeks.

The committee also voted today to impose on low-income workers some of the tax burden of paying for increases in Social Security benefits automatically tied to rises in the cost of living.

Under the House-passed bill, the higher cost-of-living benefits for all recipients would be financed entirely by increasing the amount of income subject to social security taxes. The wage base now is \$9,000.

Under the Senate version, half of the necessary tax increase would come from increasing the wage base and the other half from raising the tax rate paid by all workers.

The committee also voted today to bring chiropractic services under coverage of Part B (doctor fees) of Medicare. This would cost about \$100-million a year.

The committee also approved a variety of other changes in Medicare and Medicaid, most of them merely technical.

One change would create a series of pilot programs, at a cost of \$75-million a year, to provide Medicaid coverage for mentally ill children in public mental hospitals.