

As paperless billing and digital-only financial communications become the default, Americans face a growing risk of financial exposure through fraud, cybercrime, and the loss of physical records that serve as verifiable, tamper-resistant evidence. Forced digital transitions do not simply change the delivery channel; they eliminate a layer of security that millions of Americans rely on to dispute errors, document benefits, and protect their financial lives.

65%

of Americans are increasingly worried their personal data held electronically is at risk of being hacked, stolen, lost, or damaged

84%

of consumers read physical mail the same day it arrives — meaning critical financial and legal notices are far less likely to be missed

56%

of households that receive paper bills cite record-keeping as their primary reason

THE RISKS OF DIGITAL-ONLY BILLING

Digital records are vulnerable in ways paper is not. Consumers who rely solely on digital delivery face exposure that paper would prevent.



Loss of Access

Companies can shut down portals, archive records, or lock accounts making digital documents inaccessible. Paper cannot be remotely deleted.



Phishing and Spoofing

Digital billing creates vectors for fraudulent notices, fake invoices, and account takeover scams that paper mail does not.



Digital Outages

Cyberattacks, data breaches, and extended outages can make digital financial records temporarily or permanently unavailable when they are needed.

WHY PAPER RECORDS ARE IRREPLACEABLE

For billing disputes, benefits verification, and legal proceedings, a paper record provides something digital cannot always guarantee:



Permanence



Consumer Ownership



Tamper Resistance



Legal Standing

U.S. consumers reported \$12.5 billion in fraud losses to the FTC in 2024, a 25% increase over the prior year, with email the most common contact method and bank transfers and cryptocurrency the dominant payment methods used by scammers.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Protect paper billing access as a consumer right — specifically to preserve the tamper-resistant audit trail that paper provides in disputes, benefits verification, and legal proceedings.
2. Require that any agency or company moving to digital-default delivery keep paper delivery as a free, penalty-free alternative, not an option buried in account settings.
3. Direct the FTC and CFPB to examine the relationship between paperless billing mandates and increased consumer fraud exposure, particularly for older Americans.