

**NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF
SOCIAL SECURITY CLAIMANTS' REPRESENTATIVES
(NOSSCR)**

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**Written Statement for the Record
on behalf of the
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives**

Hearing on Fighting Social Security Disability Fraud

**Subcommittee on Social Security
House Committee on Ways and Means**

February 26, 2014

Submitted by:

Barbara Silverstone, Executive Director

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These comments are submitted on behalf of the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR) as a Statement for the Record of the February 26 2014, House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee hearing on Preventing Social Security Disability Fraud.

Founded in 1979, NOSSCR is a professional association of attorneys and other advocates who represent individuals seeking Social Security disability or Supplemental Security Income ("SSI") benefits. NOSSCR members represent these individuals in legal proceedings before the Social Security Administration and in federal court. NOSSCR is a national organization with a current membership of more than 4,000 members from the private and public sectors and is committed to the highest quality legal representation for claimants.

In January 2014, a group of approximately 100 former police officers, firefighters and others were indicted in New York City for allegations of fraudulently obtaining Social Security Disability Insurance benefits, as part of what is being described in news reports as a concerted action over several years. The allegations are extremely troubling and are receiving close scrutiny by the Social Security Administration and law enforcement.

NOSSCR condemns any misuse of the Social Security disability programs. If true, the allegations are beyond reprehensible. Any individual who seeks to abuse the Social Security disability programs casts a shadow over the millions of Americans with significant disabilities and severe illnesses who are entitled to receive these benefits, and for whom benefits are a vital lifeline. Any individual who receives, or seeks to receive, benefits based on fraudulent evidence should be brought to justice.

As an organization that fights for the economic security of American workers with disabilities and their families, we are alarmed when unscrupulous behavior jeopardizes the integrity of a program that provides crucial benefits to the disabled workers for whom our members advocate daily. We support efforts of SSA and Congress to ensure that the program is structured to ferret out fraudulent activity.

The Social Security Administration (SSA) works hard to ensure program integrity, and thankfully fraud is extremely rare – but even one instance of abuse is unacceptable. SSA has been deprived of the administrative resources it requires to conduct necessary program integrity work for several years. Congress must provide SSA with sufficient administrative resources to ensure that benefits are paid to the right person, in the right amount, and at the right time – and to implement the array of critical safeguards that exist in current law.

NOSSCR strongly supports the Social Security Fraud and Error Prevention Act of 2014 (H.R. 4090), introduced on February 26, 2014, by Subcommittee Ranking Member Becerra, and co-sponsored by Representatives Levin, Rangel, Doggett, Thompson, Crowley and Schwartz. H.R. 4090 would provide SSA with the tools it needs to prevent fraud before it happens, ensure that the agency has adequate administrative resources to implement critical safeguards, and expand the agency's authority to investigate and punish fraud. We support this approach to ensure program integrity.

NOSSCR also supports the Statement for the Record submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force.