

The Honorable Representative Dave Camp, Chairman  
The Honorable Representative Sander Levin, Ranking Member  
Ways and Means Committee  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Representative Geoff Davis, Chairman  
The Honorable Representative Lloyd Doggett, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Human Resources  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Camp, Levin, Davis, and Doggett,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for children, and for your attention to the issues families of children with disabilities face. We look forward to the full report on SSI benefits for children from the U.S. Government Accountability Office in April 2012. I am writing to submit a written statement for consideration by the Subcommittee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing on October 27, 2011 related to SSI benefits for children.

As a national nonprofit parent center, PACER Center enhances the quality of life and expands opportunities for all children and young adults, including those with disabilities and their families, so that each person can reach his or her highest potential. PACER operates on the principle of parents helping parents, supporting families and working in collaboration with others since 1978. More than 45,000 parents and others contact us for services each year, and our staff members work with families each day, to ensure that children with disabilities are able to succeed in school and in life. **SSI benefits are a critical factor in that success for many low-income families.**

The SSI program does provide financial support for families of children with disabilities. For many low-income recipients of this benefit, SSI allows families to ensure the best care for their child in the home and community, rather than in more costly institutions. Families contact PACER when faced with the confusing and fractured systems of care for children with disabilities, including education, health care, SSI, and others. It is our experience, working with many thousands of families over more than 30 years that SSI benefits contribute to the household stability that permits low-income children with disabilities to reach their highest potential. Further, certification of disability through SSI is often a critical step in accessing needed state and local services, independent of receiving SSI benefits. **SSI does not fully cover the financial costs of raising a child with a disability, and in no way incentivizes the identification of a disability or the medication of a child.**

In seeking improvements to the outcomes for children with disabilities whose families receive SSI payments, the Committee is undertaking an important conversation. Ensuring the stability of low-income families of children with disabilities, and allowing children to receive timely treatment and services at home and in the community is a critical first step. It is this step that SSI benefits support.

Thank you once again for your work on SSI benefits for children and your commitment to improving lives of individuals with disabilities. Thank you also, in advance, for your consideration of the above-mentioned comments.

Sincerely,

Heather Kilgore, Director of Public Policy  
PACER Center  
8161 Normandale Blvd  
Minneapolis, MN 55437  
952-838-9000  
heather.kilgore@pacer.org