July 28, 2020

The Honorable Danny Davis  
Chairman, Ways & Means Worker & Family Support Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C., 20515

The Honorable John Larson  
Chairman, Ways & Means Subcommittee on Social Security  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Davis and Chairman Larson:

On behalf of the 1.4 million Americans we serve every year, Easterseals is writing to voice our strong support for the Fairness for Seniors and People with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit all Americans hard, but portions of the population, namely seniors and people with disabilities, are acutely susceptible to the virus and financially vulnerable to loss of income or employment. That is why Social Security Income (SSI) benefits are a lifeline to those who relied on it prior to the pandemic, and became even more critical when the COVID-19 crisis caused widespread disruption in the United States.

When a Social Security or SSI beneficiary’s circumstances change, the Social Security Administration (SSA) is required to reduce or cut benefits subject to the program rules. Prior to the pandemic, SSA would send overpayment or collections notifications. However, beginning in March, SSA suspended most work relating to reducing benefits due to the public health emergency. This was done to ensure vulnerable populations receiving benefits were not unduly harmed in the midst of the public health emergency.

Because SSA did not inform beneficiaries of the overpayments, many Americans were unknowingly receiving extra benefits. With SSA announcing it will start collecting COVID-19 payments in August 2020, Easterseals is deeply concerned that this process would put thousands of seniors and individuals with disabilities in unnecessary financial positions, especially if SSA demands individuals repay hundreds or even thousands of dollars. We are distressed this situation would disproportionately harm those in fragile financial situations, especially as we are still in the throes of this public health emergency.

The Fairness for Seniors and People with Disabilities During COVID-19 Act protects these vulnerable populations who have received SSI benefits from having to repay benefits overpaid during the COVID-19 pandemic. This common-sense proposal will protect thousands of SSI beneficiaries during this unprecedented period in history. Therefore, Easterseals urges the House of Representatives to swiftly pass this legislation.
If you have any questions, please contact Connie Garner at CGarner@Easterseals.com.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Angela Williams, President and CEO
On Behalf of the Easterseals Affiliate Network

Easterseals National Office
Easterseals Alabama
Easterseals Alaska
Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana
Easterseals Arkansas
Easterseals Blake Foundation
Easterseals Cardinal Hill
Easterseals Central and Southeast Ohio
Easterseals Central California
Easterseals Central Illinois
Easterseals Colorado
Easterseals Crossroads
Easterseals DC MD VA
Easterseals Delaware & Maryland’s Eastern Shore
Easterseals DuPage & Fox Valley
Easterseals East Georgia
Easterseals Eastern Pennsylvania
Easterseals Florida
Easterseals Greater Houston
Easterseals Hawaii
Easterseals Iowa
Easterseals Joliet Region
Easterseals Louisiana
Easterseals Maine
Easterseals Massachusetts
Easterseals Michigan
Easterseals Middle Georgia
Easterseals Midwest
Easterseals Nebraska
Easterseals New Hampshire
Easterseals New Jersey
Easterseals New York
Easterseals North Georgia
Easterseals North Texas
Easterseals Northeast Central Florida
Easterseals Northern California
Easterseals Northern Ohio
Easterseals of Mahoning, Trumbull & Columbiana Counties
Easterseals of Oak Hill
Easterseals Oregon
Easterseals Rehabilitation Center
Easterseals Rhode Island
Easterseals Rio Grande Valley
Easterseals San Antonio
Easterseals Serving Capital Region & Eastern Connecticut
Easterseals Serving Central Texas
Easterseals Serving Chicagoland & Rockford
Easterseals Serving Greater Cincinnati
Easterseals Serving Greater Waterbury
Easterseals Serving Southern Georgia & the Big Bend of Florida
Easterseals South Carolina
Easterseals South Florida
Easterseals Southeast Wisconsin
Easterseals Southeastern Pennsylvania
Easterseals Southern California
Easterseals Southwest Florida
Easterseals Southwest Human Development
Easterseals Superior California
Easterseals Tennessee
Easterseals UCP North Carolina & Virginia
Easterseals Vermont
Easterseals Washington
Easterseals West Georgia
Easterseals West Kentucky
Easterseals West Virginia
Easterseals Western and Central Pennsylvania
Easterseals Wisconsin
Easterseals Wyoming
Easterseals-Goodwill North Dakota
Easterseals-Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain
Goodwill-Easterseals Miami Valley
Goodwill-Easterseals of the Gulf Coast
Goodwill-Easterseals Minnesota