



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

September 24, 2009

The Honorable Charles B. Rangel, Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel and Chairman Waxman:

The undersigned Co-Chairs of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Task Forces on Health, Long-Term Services and Supports, and Social Security, we support H.R. 3631, the “Medicare Premium Fairness Act.” This bill will protect the Social Security benefits of persons with disabilities by ensuring that their monthly payments are not reduced due to an increase in Medicare Part B premiums.

It is expected that there will be no cost of living adjustment (COLA) in Social Security benefits paid in 2010, which will cause a hardship for individuals with disabilities and others who receive Social Security payments. However, Medicare Part B premiums are expected to increase. Fortunately, under current law, most of these beneficiaries will be “held harmless” and will not see an actual reduction in their monthly Social Security benefits. However, about 27% of beneficiaries are not covered by the “hold harmless” provision, including low-income individuals who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid, new Medicare enrollees, and new enrollees whose Medicare premiums are not deducted from their Social Security checks. Their monthly Social Security benefits, which are the sole source of income for many, could be reduced by more than \$20 per month to pay for the premium increase. Another unprotected group is former beneficiaries of Social Security disability benefits who are now working and who “buy-in” to Medicare under the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act.

H.R. 3631 would extend the current “hold harmless” policy to all Medicare beneficiaries. As a result, no individual with disabilities who is a Social Security beneficiary will see a

decrease in his or her monthly Social Security benefits due to Medicare Part B premiums. In addition, former beneficiaries who buy-in to Medicare will be protected.

We support your effort to pass H.R. 3631.

Sincerely,

Marty Ford
The Arc of the United States and United Cerebral Palsy

Andrew Morris
United Spinal Association and National Spinal Cord Injury Association

Susan Prokop
Paralyzed Veterans of America

Liz Savage
The Arc of the United States and United Cerebral Palsy

Paul Seifert
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

Ethel Zelenske
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives