

Improving the Quality of Disability Decisions Act of 2015 (H.R. 2136)

Continuing [Chairman Johnson's commitment](#) to make Social Security's disability programs work better, the *Improving the Quality of Disability Decisions Act of 2015* (H.R. 2136) requires the Social Security Administration to review hearing decisions by Administrative Law Judges to ensure that the judges are following the law and Social Security's regulation and policy. It will also require Social Security to report the results of these quality reviews to the Committee on Ways and Means.

The Social Security Administration has recently begun performing quality reviews of Administrative Law Judge decisions, which has led to improvement in the consistency, quality, and accuracy of disability decisions. This is a promising development by Social Security, and this bill will make quality reviews of decisions a requirement of law.

- In FY 2011, Social Security began performing reviews of randomly sampled disability decisions, with the ability to correct the decisions before they become final ("pre-effectuation").
- In response to a request by Chairman Johnson, Social Security's Inspector General issued a 2012 audit of the quality review work being performed by Social Security, including pre-effectuation and post-effectuation review.¹ The next year, in testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the Inspector General stated that he approves of the quality review work that the agency is performing.²
- In 2013, three years into the agency's quality review work, an agency executive reported that these quality reviews "have given us a new opportunity to improve our policy guidance," "identify for us the most error-prone provisions of law and regulation," and assist in providing effective training to judges.³ Thus, it is imperative that this work by Social Security continue, and be given the force of law.

¹ "The Social Security Administration's Review of Administrative Law Judges' Decisions," March 2012. Available at: <http://oig.ssa.gov/sites/default/files/audit/full/pdf/A-07-12-21234.pdf>.

² Testimony of Patrick O'Carroll, Jr., Inspector General, before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, November 19, 2013. Available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-113hhrg86479/html/CHRG-113hhrg86479.htm>.

³ Statement of Glenn Sklar, Deputy Commissioner for Disability Adjudication and Review, before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, June 27, 2013. Available at: http://www.ssa.gov/legislation/testimony_062713.html.