



# National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery

1101 15th St., Suite 1212, Washington, DC 20005

January 29, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
H-232 U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Office of the Democratic Leader  
H-204 US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Democratic Leader Pelosi:

I write on behalf of the National Coalition for Mental Health Recovery (NCMHR) regarding the final rule the Social Security Administration (SSA) released on December 19th, 2016, implementing provisions of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Improvement Amendments Act of 2007, 81 FR 91702.

NCMHR submitted comments to SSA on the proposed rule in June 2016. In our comments, we cautioned against implementation of the proposed rule because there is no causal connection between the inability to manage money and the ability to safely and responsibly own, possess or use a firearm. This arbitrary linkage not only unnecessarily and unreasonably deprives individuals with disabilities of a constitutional right, it increases the stigma for those who, due to their disabilities, may need a representative payee.

Despite our objections and that of many other individuals and organizations received by SSA regarding the proposed rule, the final rule released in late December was largely unchanged. Because of the importance of the constitutional right at stake and the very real stigma that this rule legitimizes, NCMHR recommends that Congress consider utilizing the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to repeal this rule.

NCMHR is a nonpartisan, nonprofit with no stated position with respect to gun-ownership or gun-control other than our long-held position that restrictions on gun possession or ownership based on psychiatric or intellectual disability must be based on a verifiable concern as to whether the individual poses a heightened risk of danger to themselves or others if they are in possession of a weapon. Additionally, it is critically important that any restriction on gun possession or ownership on this basis is imposed only after the individual has been afforded due process and given an opportunity to respond to allegations that they are not able to safely possess or own a firearm due to his or

her disability. NCMHR believes that SSA's final rule falls far short of meeting these criteria.

The CRA is a powerful mechanism for controlling regulatory overreach, and NCMHR urges its use advisedly and cautiously. In this particular case, the potential for real harm to the constitutional rights of people with psychiatric and intellectual disabilities is grave as is the potential to undermine the essential mission of an agency that millions of people with and without disabilities rely upon to meet their basic needs. Therefore, in this instance, NCMHR feels that utilizing the CRA to repeal the final rule is not only warranted, but necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel B. Fisher, MD, PhD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'D'.

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Daniel B. Fisher, MD, PhD, Chair NCMHR