



Justice. Community. Inclusion.

Disability Rights Connecticut

"Connecticut's protection and advocacy system"

846 Wethersfield Avenue
Hartford, CT 06114

December 13, 2017

Representative Sam Johnson
Chairman, Social Security Subcommittee
Committee on Ways and Means
2304 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Representative John B. Larson
Ranking Member, Social Security Subcommittee
Committee on Ways and Means
1501 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C., 20515

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Larson:

Thank you for introducing the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017 (H.R. 4547), bipartisan legislation to improve and strengthen the Social Security Administration's (SSA) representative payee program. This legislation is necessary to create a permanent, independent system of oversight to protect Social Security beneficiaries from fraud and exploitation. It also addresses issues of choice by beneficiaries and decreases reporting burdens on families.

As an employee of the Connecticut protection and advocacy system during the previous iteration of Representative Payee reviews, I experienced how important it was to conduct on site reviews of financial accounts but even more invaluable to meet Social Security recipients, interview them and see where they live. The reviews also informed other areas of advocacy conducted by the agency and would be an asset to Disability Rights Connecticut, the new protection and advocacy system for Connecticut.

Disability Rights Connecticut's mission is to advocate, educate, investigate and litigate to advance and protect the civil rights of people with disabilities to participate, equally and fully in the social and economic life of Connecticut. As a protection and advocacy system we do this through information and referral, technical assistance, investigation, monitoring and advocacy. We also provide training, education and outreach to empower individuals to advocate for themselves and others.

Again, thank you for your sponsorship of H.R. 4547. Please do not hesitate to contact me or refer your Connecticut inquiries to Disability Rights Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Knauff
Executive Director