



January 12, 2018

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

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

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Larson:

On behalf of Disability Rights NC, I write in strong support of H.R. 4547, the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017. Enactment of this legislation will provide critical protections for Social Security beneficiaries as well as needed reforms to the crucial representative payee program.

During the period of time when Protection and Advocacy Programs were conducting Representative Payee Reviews, Disability Rights NC conducted 270 reviews which included interviewing 1100 beneficiaries. We found that many payees were mismanaging funds and reported those organizations for follow up from SSA. Perhaps as important, because of our interactions with the beneficiaries, we made 300 referrals to outside agencies to better ensure an improved quality of life for beneficiaries.

News stories, Office of Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports, and hearings held by the House Ways and Means Committee have demonstrated the need for changes in the representative payee program. Your bipartisan legislation proposes many important and needed changes that will streamline the program as well as take important steps to increase oversight of the representative payee program by funding the nationwide network of P&A systems to monitor how representative payees are administering the Social Security funds received by beneficiaries.

Again, we greatly appreciate your work together on this important issue culminating in the introduction of this critical legislation. We stand ready to work with both of you to quickly get this important legislation enacted into law. Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at vicki.smith@disabilityrightsn.org or Corye Dunn corye.dunn@disabilityrightsn.org.

Sincerely,

Vicki Smith
Executive Director