



# DISABILITY RIGHTS

PENNSYLVANIA

Disability Rights Pennsylvania  
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December 18, 2017

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:

Thank you for the introduction of H.R. 4547, the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017. Disability Rights Pennsylvania strongly supports H.R. 4547. Enactment of this legislation will provide critical protections for Social Security beneficiaries as well as needed reforms to the crucial representative payee program.

DRP's mission is to protect and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities so that they may live the lives they choose, free from abuse, neglect, discrimination and segregation. DRP's services are statewide and are available at no cost to people with disabilities.

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.

With the fifth largest concentration of beneficiaries of representative payees, DRP stands ready to regain its partnership with the Social Security Administration to address the health and safety issues of Pennsylvania's beneficiaries. From our previous collaboration, DRP discovered many sincere and hardworking representative payees; however, we also found health, safety and financial mismanagement. In one instance,

## **Protecting and advancing the rights of people with disabilities**

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a former employee of an organizational payee in Pennsylvania stole \$975 from beneficiary funds. Disability Rights Pennsylvania reported the finding to the Social Security Administration; however, the Office of Investigative General declined to pursue a criminal investigation because the fraud loss did not meet Federal prosecutorial guidelines for this jurisdiction. Under H.R. 4547, Disability Rights Pennsylvania would be able to issue a corrective action plan for the organizational payee to ensure the beneficiary would be protected in the future.

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 be in touch me directly. You can reach me by phone at (717) 236-8110 ext 302 or email at [pradecic@disabilityrightspa.org](mailto:pradecic@disabilityrightspa.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peri Jude Radecic", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Peri Jude Radecic  
Chief Executive Officer