

January 3, 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 New Jersey, I am writing 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.

Disability Rights New Jersey has been the designated protection and advocacy system for people with disabilities in New Jersey since 1994. DRNJ seeks to ensure that New Jersey's citizens with disabilities are protected from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination in both institutional and community settings.

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.

As a member of the National Disability Rights Network, DRNJ had the opportunity to conduct site visits of smaller organizational representative payees. The vast majority of the organizations we visited want to act in a responsible manner, but many simply are not aware of Social Security's requirements, particularly about comingling funds. In some instances, individuals' funds are expended without an explanation. The site visits also gave DRNJ staff an

*Advocating and advancing the human, civil and legal rights of persons with disabilities*

Representative Sam Johnson

Representative John Larson

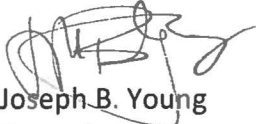
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opportunity to meet beneficiaries where they live or work and revealed some living conditions and other issues that needed to be addressed.

Again, we greatly appreciate your work on this important issue and the introduction of this critical legislation. We stand ready to work with both of you to get this important legislation enacted into law. Should you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. B. Young", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Joseph B. Young  
Executive Director

JBY/md