



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

April 3, 2012

The Honorable Sam Johnson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Social Security
Ways and Means Committee
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Social Security and Employment and Training Task Forces are writing to urge you to move expeditiously to reauthorize the Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) and Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) programs. These are two critically important programs that help beneficiaries of Social Security disability benefits attain economic self-sufficiency. The PABSS program was created in 1999 to protect the rights of beneficiaries as they attempt to go to work. The WIPA program funds Community Work Incentive Coordinators who help recipients understand their options if they choose to return to work. If these programs are not reauthorized soon, their funding will run out, causing many Social Security recipients to go without services to help them return to work.

Both WIPA and PABSS are vital to help SSDI and SSI recipients who wish to return to the workforce. WIPA grants go to local non-profits and other agencies to support outreach, education and benefits planning. WIPA grantees inform beneficiaries on the impact that employment will have on their disability income and medical coverage, and address many of the real fears that individuals have about going to work at the risk of losing health coverage.

PABSS provides a wide range of services to Social Security beneficiaries. This includes information and advice about obtaining vocational rehabilitation and employment services, information and referral services on work incentives, and advocacy or other legal services that a beneficiary needs to secure, maintain, or regain gainful employment. Advocates funded by PABSS can investigate and advocate to remedy complaints of employment discrimination and other civil and legal rights violations, and to address deficiencies in entities providing employment supports and services to beneficiaries.

Authorization for both the PABSS and WIPA programs expired on September 30, 2011. Fortunately, the Social Security Administration (SSA) was able to set aside funding to sustain the WIPA program until June 30, 2012, and the PABSS program until September 30, 2012. The imminent loss of funding threatens to severely compromise their long-term effectiveness. The lack of certain funding limits the ability of many WIPA and PABSS programs to make operational plans beyond the next three to six months. Loss of funding may result in layoffs and long-term disruptions to the ability of grantees to provide these services. The loss of personnel and their acquired expertise and experience may take years to replace.

We understand that SSA has sent to the Hill proposed legislation to renew WIPA and PABSS for five years and to make additional modifications in the programs. Because time is of the essence for WIPA and PABSS grantees to continue serving Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities, we ask that the Committee act as soon as possible to extend the programs for at least three years.

ACCSES

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation

Easter Seals

International Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

National Association of Disability Representatives

National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities

National Council on Independent Living

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives

National Rehabilitation Association

Paralyzed Veterans of America

The Arc of the United States

United Cerebral Palsy

United Spinal Association



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

April 3, 2012

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Social Security and Employment and Training Task Forces are writing to urge you to move expeditiously to reauthorize the Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) and Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) programs. These are two critically important programs that help beneficiaries of Social Security disability benefits attain economic self-sufficiency. The PABSS program was created in 1999 to protect the rights of beneficiaries as they attempt to go to work. The WIPA program funds Community Work Incentive Coordinators who help recipients understand their options if they choose to return to work. If these programs are not reauthorized soon, their funding will run out, causing many Social Security recipients to go without services to help them return to work.

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April 3, 2012

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Social Security
Ways and Means Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Becerra:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Social Security and Employment and Training Task Forces are writing to urge you to move expeditiously to reauthorize the Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) and Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) programs. These are two critically important programs that help beneficiaries of Social Security disability benefits attain economic self-sufficiency. The PABSS program was created in 1999 to protect the rights of beneficiaries as they attempt to go to work. The WIPA program funds Community Work Incentive Coordinators who help recipients understand their options if they choose to return to work. If these programs are not reauthorized soon, their funding will run out, causing many Social Security recipients to go without services to help them return to work.

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April 3, 2012

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Hatch:

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