



January 11, 2014

United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senators:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities are writing to express our opposition to proposals to eliminate or reduce Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) benefits for individuals who concurrently receive Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits as a partial offset for extending the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program.

The DI and UI programs have been established for different purposes and largely serve different populations. As highlighted in a 2012 report by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), less than one percent of individuals served by the DI and UI programs receive concurrent benefits.

At the same time, receiving UI and DI is not inconsistent. This has been the long-standing position of the Social Security Administration and of the courts. Individuals who receive concurrent benefits do so because they have significant disabilities that make them eligible for DI, and because they have also attempted to work at a low level of earnings but have lost their job through no fault of their own. According to the GAO, the average quarterly concurrent benefit in fiscal year 2010 was about \$1,100 in DI and \$2,200 in UI for a quarterly average of about \$3,300 in total benefits.

These benefits can be a lifeline to workers with disabilities who receive them, and their families. We are concerned about any cuts to these already modest benefits, and about the prospect of worsening the economic security of workers with disabilities and their families at a time when the economy continues to struggle.

Finally, we believe that changes to our nation's Social Security system should be carefully considered as part of discussions about how to strengthen Social Security, and that benefit cuts to Social Security should not be considered as part of offsets for other important benefit programs.

In closing, while we strongly support extending the EUC program, we oppose amendments to partially offset the costs by eliminating or reducing concurrent DI and UI benefits.

Sincerely,

ACCSES
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autism National Committee
Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN)
Community Legal Services, Inc.
Brain Injury Association of America
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Easter Seals
Goodwill Industries International
Health and Disability Advocates
Lupus Foundation of America
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
National Association of Disability Representatives
National Association of County Behavioral Health & Developmental Disability Directors
National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)
National Disability Rights Network
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization on Disability
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
TASH
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association
World Institute on Disability