



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

Social Security Task Force Supports Expansion of SSI to Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) improves financial security for more than 4.3 million people with disabilities and over a million people over age 65, all of whom meet strict limits on income and assets. The maximum SSI benefit for 2020 is just \$783 per month, well below the federal poverty line, but even this extremely modest benefit helps senior citizens and people with disabilities to maintain housing, purchase food, and meet other basic needs.

However, the SSI program is only available to people living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and the Northern Mariana Islands. People living in Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and Guam have different programs, but funding for them is more limited and they are not available for children. American Samoa has neither SSI nor these other block-granted programs.

The current restrictions on SSI mean some people with disabilities are unable to travel or live where they choose without losing necessary benefits. Families are separated, unequal treatment persists, and poverty is increased. For example, in December 2018, twin sisters with the same disability filed suit in Guam and Pennsylvania. The sister living in Guam cannot receive SSI; the one in Pennsylvania can, but she cannot move to be with her sister without losing her benefits.¹

For these reasons, the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force supports legislation that would expand SSI to Puerto Rico, Guam, the US Virgin Islands, and American Samoa. H.R. 947 would provide SSI in all four locations, while H.R. 208 applies only to Guam. Although the former bill would have a more significant impact, both bills would improve the lives of senior citizens and people with disabilities, reducing poverty and increasing self-determination.

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¹ <https://pncguam.com/twin-sisters-sue-feds-over-denial-of-ssi-benefits-all-because-1-sister-lives-in-guam/>;
<http://calvofisher.com/firm/news/cfj-representing-twin-sisters-fighting-social-security-rules-deny-aid-us-citizens>