



Commemorating 40 Years  
Of Disability Advocacy  
1973-2013

**Statement of Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force  
Regarding Recent New York City Disability Fraud Allegations -- January 11, 2014**

Approximately 100 former police officers, firefighters and others were indicted this week in New York City for allegedly fraudulently obtaining Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. The allegations are extremely troubling, and if true, these individuals' actions are nothing short of deplorable.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Social Security Task Force condemns any misuse of the Social Security disability programs. Any individual who seeks to abuse vital programs like Social Security does so at the expense of the millions of disabled workers for whom benefits provide essential economic security -- and must be brought to justice.

At the same time, we must take care not to paint Social Security's disability programs with the brush of the few who aim to defraud it, without putting them in the context of the millions of individuals who receive benefits appropriately and for whom Social Security is a vital lifeline.

Social Security's disability programs are a core component of our nation's Social Security system, which keeps millions of hardworking Americans and their families out of poverty. Extremely strict eligibility requirements mean that fewer than four in ten applicants are approved for disability benefits, even after all stages of appeal. Demonstrating eligibility requires extensive medical evidence, and many individuals are denied benefits despite significant disabilities and chronic illnesses. Benefits are modest but vital -- averaging just over \$500 per month for Supplemental Security Income and approximately \$1,130 per month for Social Security Disability Insurance. For many, disability benefits make it possible to secure stable housing and purchase food, life-sustaining medications, and other basic necessities. Disability benefits can be the difference between life and death for many Americans.

The Social Security Administration works hard to ensure program integrity, but it requires adequate resources to do so. It has been deprived of adequate administrative resources to conduct necessary program integrity work for several years. Congress holds the purse strings to enable the Social Security Administration to ensure that benefits are paid to the right person, in the right amount, and at the right time -- and to implement the array of critical safeguards that exist in current law.

We encourage anyone who suspects abuse of the Social Security disability programs to report it via Social Security's hotline [1-800-269-0271](tel:1-800-269-0271) or online at [www.oig.ssa.gov](http://www.oig.ssa.gov).

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