



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 19, 2006

The Honorable Ralph Regula
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies
House of Representatives
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Regula:

We are writing to urge you to support the provision in the supplemental appropriations bill passed by the Senate that would provide an additional \$38 million for the Social Security Administration (SSA) to reimburse the costs SSA incurred as a result of Hurricane Katrina and other hurricanes in the 2005 season.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is a working coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider, and professional organizations working together with and on behalf of the 54 million children and adults with disabilities and their families living in the United States. The CCD Social Security Task Force focuses on disability and other issues in the Title II disability programs and in the Title XVI Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program.

Millions of people with disabilities rely on the Social Security Administration. In the aftermath of the 2005 hurricanes, SSA provided essential services to people with disabilities in evacuation centers, shelters, and in their field offices. SSA provided immediate payments to Social Security and SSI beneficiaries who lost access to their benefit checks, including on-site in evacuation centers and shelters. SSA implemented emergency procedures to process applications for survivors. Temporary offices were established to replace those offices that were damaged. Thousands of paper disability claim files pending in the New Orleans Disability Determination Services (DDS) office were retrieved. And 1,500 cases that were stored electronically were reassigned and processed.

As a result of these extraordinary efforts, SSA was required to redirect \$38 million from funding for its normal tasks and obligations. These unexpected and additional costs included: renovating damaged offices; setting up temporary offices; costs for new workloads such as processing immediate payments, changing addresses, confirming Social Security

numbers, and taking new claims that resulted from the hurricanes; and paying for employees to travel to affected areas to help.

SSA does a good job with limited resources and it is a well-managed agency. We have been concerned, and continue to be concerned, that SSA does not have adequate resources to meet all of its current responsibilities, including those of importance to people with disabilities. To meet the needs of claimants and beneficiaries during the hurricane emergencies in 2005, SSA was required to redirect \$38 million from a budget that had already been reduced \$300 million below the President's request for this fiscal year. The supplemental appropriation of \$38 million will help to restore the loss of resources so that SSA may continue addressing its substantial on-going workload.

Sincerely,

Co-Chairs, CCD Social Security Task Force

Ethel Zelenske
National Organization of Social Security
Claimants' Representatives

Marty Ford
The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy

cc: Chairman Jerry Lewis