



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

September 25, 2015

Ms. Helen Applewhaite  
Ms. Christine Schott  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Wage and Hour Division  
200 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Helen and Christine:

The undersigned members of the Developmental Disabilities, Autism, and Family Support Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) write to extend our sincere appreciation for the Department of Labor's recent clarification of Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) eligibility for siblings.

Prior to this important clarification, FMLA safeguards were believed only to apply to a parent, spouse, or child of an individual with a serious health condition. That interpretation ignored a critical member for millions of Americans with disabilities - siblings. As the baby boom generation ages, siblings are more frequently being called upon to assume the caregiver role for their brother or sister with a disability.

With DOL's reissued guidance, we now know that siblings may take up to 12 work weeks of job-protected unpaid leave under certain circumstances to care for their brother or sister with a serious health condition. In addition to protecting the financial stability of siblings, the guidance now offers significant peace of mind to many of the 54 million Americans with disabilities who are often and understandably anxious about their future support needs.

Once again, we are truly grateful to the Department for issuing this clarification. Your leadership on this matter helps to ensure that many persons with disabilities will continue to receive the necessary support to live an independent life.

Sincerely,

Autism Speaks  
American Network of Community Options and Resources  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities  
Family Voices

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Council on Aging  
National Disability Rights Network  
Sibling Leadership Network  
The Arc