

RAHALL

Weekly Report

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE

BY CONGRESSMAN NICK RAHALL

THE 1980 SOCIAL SECURITY AMENDMENTS REQUIRE THE PERIODIC REVIEW OF SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE RECIPIENTS. HOWEVER, THE LAW DOES NOT REQUIRE THE HASTE WITH WHICH THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND THE DESIGNATED STATE AGENCIES ARE CONDUCTING THE CURRENT INVESTIGATION.

SINCE 1981 THE RATE AND NUMBER OF THESE DISABILITY REVIEWS HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED WITHOUT A COMMENSURATE INCREASE IN THE PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES NECESSARY TO HANDLE THESE CASES ADEQUATELY. FORCED TO REVIEW AN INCREASED NUMBER OF CASES, THE EXAMINERS ARE TERMINATING BENEFITS WITHOUT PROPERLY CONSIDERING MEDICAL REPORTS AND WITHOUT PROVIDING THE NECESSARY GUIDANCE TO CLAIMANTS STRUGGLING WITH LENGTHY AND COMPLICATED FORMS.

AS A RESULT OF THE ACCELERATED REVIEWS, BENEFITS TO MORE THAN 100,000 ADDITIONAL DEPENDENTS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED, THOUGH MANY OF THE CLAIMANTS REMAIN UNABLE TO WORK DUE TO DISABILITY.

THE TERMINATION OF THESE DISABLED PERSONS CAUSES GREAT HARDSHIPS FOR THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES. THESE PEOPLE ARE OFTEN FORCED TO SELL THEIR BASIC BELONGINGS, INCLUDING THEIR HOMES, TO PAY FOR CONTINUED MEDICAL CARE. IN ADDITION, THEY OFTEN EXPERIENCE DEBILITATING TRAUMA FROM THE UNEXPECTED AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE REVIEW PROCESS.

IN WEST VIRGINIA, THE NUMBER OF SUCH CASES ARE ON THE RISE, AND I AM PERSONALLY AWARE OF MANY OF THE ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAVE RESULTED FROM A CUT-OFF OF DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS.

ALTHOUGH THE PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE MEDICAL CONDITION OF SSDI BENEFICIARIES IS AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF OVERSEEING THE PROGRAM, HASTY REVIEWS ARE, IN FACT, PLACING AN ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL BURDEN ON AMERICAN TAXPAYERS DUE TO THE GROWING BACKLOG OF CASES.

I HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE COMMISSIONER OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION TO URGE HIM TO CHANGE THIS CURRENT UNFAIR POLICY. I HAVE ALSO JOINED ON AS A CO-SPONSOR OF HR 6181, THE DISABILITY AMENDMENTS OF 1982, WHICH WILL PROVIDE ADDITIONAL PROTECTION FOR SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY RECIPIENTS.