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U.S. House of Representatives

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BRANDON CASEY,
MINORITY CHIEF OF STAFF

Dear Colleague,

Earlier this week, we introduced H.R. 4547, the *Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017*. This bipartisan bill makes much-needed changes to the Social Security Administration's (SSA) representative payee program to strengthen oversight and beneficiary protections, while improving payee selection and quality. It is supported by the Association of Mature American Citizens, National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, National Council of Social Security Management Associations, and the National Disability Rights Network.

The representative payee program allows the SSA to make benefit payments to another person or organization, known as a representative payee, in cases where a beneficiary is not capable of managing their own benefits – for example, if the beneficiary is a child, or has a medical condition like Alzheimer's. Reports from nonpartisan government watchdogs and stakeholders have raised serious concerns about how the SSA administers this important program.

After a two-part hearing series and feedback from stakeholders, we have introduced a bipartisan bill to:

- **Strengthen oversight of representative payees** by requiring additional types of onsite reviews of payee performance, increasing the number of reviews, and improving the effectiveness of reviews.
- **Reduce the burden on families** by eliminating the requirement to file the annual accounting form for representative payees who are parents living with their child or adult child who has a disability, or who are spouses.
- **Protect the most vulnerable beneficiaries** through improved information sharing between the SSA and state foster care programs and by requiring the SSA to study options for better coordination with Adult Protective Services agencies and state courts. It also limits overpayment liability for children in the child welfare system.
- **Improve payee selection** by allowing beneficiaries to make an advance designation of their preferred payee and by requiring the SSA to assess the appropriateness of the order-of-preference list it uses to select payees.
- **Ensure that no beneficiary has a barred payee** by codifying the policy that bans individuals with certain criminal convictions from serving as payees and prohibiting individuals who have payees from serving as a payee for others.

Additional details about the bill and endorsement letters can be found on the Committee's website:
<https://waysandmeans.house.gov/strengthening-protections-social-security-beneficiaries-act-2017/>

This bipartisan bill provides common sense changes to the representative payee program. Please join us in cosponsoring H.R. 4547. This is too important not to get right.

Sincerely,

Sam Johnson
Chairman
Subcommittee on Social Security

John B. Larson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Social Security