



DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW MEXICO

3916 Juan Tabo Blvd., NE • Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111

TEL: (505) 256-3100 • FAX: (505) 256-3184

State-wide Toll Free 1-800-432-4682

WEBSITE: www.drnmm.org • EMAIL: info@drnm.org

James Jackson, Chief Executive Officer

Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

January 11, 2018

Representative Sam Johnson
Chairman
Social Security Subcommittee
House Ways and Means Committee
2304 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Representative John Larson
Ranking Member
Social Security Subcommittee
House Ways and Means Committee
1501 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC. 20515

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Larson:

Thank you very much for sponsoring H.R. 4547, the Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017. Enactment of this legislation will provide critical protections for Social Security beneficiaries with disabilities as well as very helpful reforms to the Representative Payee program.

Here in New Mexico we are painfully aware of the problems created by the lack of sufficient oversight of those with control over the financial resources of elders and people with disabilities. Private agencies providing guardianship, conservatorship and Representative Payee services are facing criminal and civil penalties for having abused their fiduciary responsibilities and illegally diverted the funds of these vulnerable citizens for their own personal gain.

Monitoring visits that we have conducted in the past have also revealed situations in which a few Representative Payees have failed to meet their obligations and led to beneficiaries nearly losing their housing and going without adequate nutrition. A lack of monitoring or oversight has fostered this misbehavior across the country, and HR 4547 would take an important step forward in curbing it and protecting the interests of these beneficiaries.

Your leadership on this issue is greatly appreciated. We stand ready to begin this work quickly once this important legislation gets enacted into law. Should you have any questions or need more information, please contact Bernadine Chavez, our Program Services Division Director, at BChavez@drnm.org.

Sincerely,

James Jackson, CEO
