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December 18, 2017

Representative Sam Johnson
Chairman
Social Security Subcommittee
House Ways and Means Committee

Representative John Larson
Ranking Member
Social Security Subcommittee
House Ways and Means Committee

VIA Fax: 202-225-1485

VIA Fax: 202-225-1031

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Larson:

I write today on behalf of the Oklahoma Disability Law Center, Inc.(ODLC), to thank you for your support of 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 as well as needed reforms to the crucial representative payee program.

My name is Melissa Sublett, I am the Executive Director at ODLC, the designated Protection and Advocacy system for people with disabilities in Oklahoma. Our office did reviews of Organizational Representative Payees on behalf of the Social Security Administration for six years when the contract for this was in place with the Protection and Advocacy Network. While doing the Representative Payee review work we uncovered numerous problems in how some Representative Payees carried out their responsibilities that compromised the welfare of the beneficiaries they were supposed to serve.

We know firsthand how this partnership between the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the P&A systems will not only allow SSA to meet their responsibilities, but also allows the P&A systems to uncover and address health and safety issues and other matters important to the beneficiary that fall outside of SSA's purview. For example, while conducting previous representative payee reviews, our office uncovered mismanagement of funds, violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) involving improper use of 14(c) certificates and possible fraud. Our office was able to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Labor regarding the FLSA violation which resulted in nine individuals being compensated for back wages totaling more than \$46,000.

Again, we greatly appreciate your work together on this important issue culminating in the introduction of this critical legislation. Should you have any questions or need more information, please don't hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 918-830-5559 or via email at melissa@okdlc.org

Sincerely,



Melissa K. Sublett
Executive Director