



Family
Focused
Treatment
Association

February 5, 2018

Chairman Sam Johnson
Subcommittee on Social Security
Ways and Means Committee
2304 RHOB
US House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member John Larson
Subcommittee on Social Security
Ways and Means Committee
1501 LHOB
US House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Johnson and Ranking Member Larson:

I am writing you on behalf of the Family Focused Treatment Association (FFTA) in support of HR 4547, Strengthening Protections for Social Security Beneficiaries Act of 2017, specifically **Section 103: Protecting Beneficiaries through Information Sharing** and **Section 104: Clarifying Overpayment Liability for Children in Child Welfare System**.

FFTA has 477 agency members across the country, which provide intensive mental and behavioral health treatment services to over 40,000 youths ages 0-21 annually. These youths are in the custody of state child welfare and/or state juvenile justice departments. Many, through their caregivers both kinship and non-relative foster parents, rely on receiving Social Security benefits to receive intensive, trauma-informed services in their own communities in family settings. If these youths were not in therapeutic family care (TFC), they would be relegated to higher levels of institutional care, typically with increased costs and decreased positive outcomes.

The vast majority of children receiving social security benefits/Supplemental Security Income, rely on a representative payee: sometimes that is the public child welfare agency; other times that is a foster-parent or kinship caregiver; other times that may be a biological parent.

Sections 103 and 104 of HR 4547 improve oversight and accountability of these benefit funds in a coordinated effort to ensure that they are appropriately used for the needs of the designated child. Furthermore, should the state IV-E program provide overpayment in error to a child, the child will not be held responsible.

We ask that you pass and sufficiently fund these bipartisan provisions.

We appreciate your work and this opportunity for comment.

Sincerely,

Laura W. Boyd, Ph.D.
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Family Focused Treatment Association
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