



Social Security Advisory Board

Kim Hildred, Chair
Henry J. Aaron
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Claire Green, Staff Director

Board Meeting Minutes – November 21-22, 2019

Location: 400 Virginia Avenue, SW
Suite 625
Washington, DC 20024

Time: 8:00am - 4:30pm EST

SSAB Members: Kim Hildred, Chair
Henry Aaron
Nancy Altman
Jagadeesh Gokhale
Bob Joondeph

SSAB Staff: Claire Green, staff director
Diane Brandt, research director
Bethel Dejene, management officer
Mayana Bonapart, policy analyst
Pamela Crawford, senior advisor
Joel Feinleib, senior advisor
Anita Grant, senior advisor
Lorena Hernandez Barcena, policy analyst
Matthew Lewis, communications intern
Conway Reinders, lead policy analyst
Jenn Rigger, senior advisor
Omar Shalabi, research intern
Emma Tatem, lead policy analyst

Participants: **Lisa Ekman**, director of government relations, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives; member, Working Group on Disability Insurance, Bipartisan Policy Center

Howard Goldman, professor of psychiatry, University of Maryland School of Medicine; Institute of Medicine liaison, Committee on Psychological Testing, Including Validity Testing, National Academy of Sciences

Philip Litteral, immediate past president and legislative affairs liaison, National Association of Disability Representatives

Judith Green McKenzie, professor, division chief, and residency program director, Division of Occupational Medicine, Department of Emergency Medicine, University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine; member, Committee on Functional Assessment of Adults with Disabilities, National Academy of Sciences

L. Scott Muller, senior economist, Office of Research, Evaluation and Statistics, Social Security Administration (SSA) (*retired*)

Gerald Ray, deputy director, Office of Appellate Operations, SSA (*retired*)

Leon Scales, next president of the National Council on Disability Determination Directors; director, Virginia Disability Determination Services

Glenn Sklar, former SSA executive in the policy and hearings level components

Melissa Spencer, assistant associate commissioner, Office of Disability Policy, SSA (*retired*)

Sara Winn, president, National Association of Disability Examiners; disability examiner, Louisiana Disability Determination Services

November 21, 2019

On November 21st, the Board continued its congressionally requested examination of possible improvements to the initial and reconsideration levels of Social Security's disability determination process with two public roundtables. The roundtables brought together experts to evaluate a series of academic, government, and policy proposals covering the role of evidence and experts in the disability determination process, as well as the role of performance metrics and data analytics in Social Security's quality review process. Participants shared their ideas for possible process improvements.

Key proposals and recommendations under discussion included:

- *Improve the SSDI Program and Address the Impending Trust Fund Depletion: Consensus Recommendations of BPC's Disability Insurance Working Group*, Bipartisan Policy Center, August 2015.

- *Psychological Testing in the Service of Disability Determination*, National Academy of Sciences, Committee on Psychological Testing, Including Validity Testing, for Social Security Administration Disability Determinations, 2015.
- *Functional Assessment for Adults with Disabilities*, National Academy of Sciences, Committee on Functional Assessment for Adults with Disabilities, 2019.
- *Resolving Issues Identified During the Social Security Administration's Quality Reviews of Disability Determinations*, Office of the Inspector General, (A-01-11-11119), April 2012.
- Ray, Gerald and Glenn Sklar. "An Operational Approach to Eliminating Backlogs in the Social Security Disability Program." McCrey-Pomeroy SSDI Solutions Initiative, June 2019.
- *Training at offices that make disability determinations*, The Office of Inspector General, (A-01-11-21169), March 2012.
- *Roundtable Discussion on the Social Security Disability Process* (National Alliance on Mental Illness, National Council of Disability Determination Directors, National Council of Social Security Management Associations, National Council on Disability, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives), Social Security Advisory Board, March 27, 2019.

Ideas from the discussion included:

- Increased use of management information at all levels of the Social Security Administration
- Involving researchers in the design of data collection, including tools and methods
- Involving doctors in the creation of disability questionnaires and forms
- Incorporating social security disability training and information in medical school curricula and continuing education
- How to use claimant contact effectively and improve notices and materials
- Implementing feedback-oriented interactive training and training tools in the quality review process
- Incorporating meaningful feedback, including positive feedback, across offices that make disability determinations to promote behavioral change and clarify policy

November 21, 2019

On November 22nd, the Board met in executive session.

I certify that the public minutes written for the September 26 - 27, 2019 meeting of the Social Security Advisory Board are correct.

Kim Hildred

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