

Public Forum on the SSI Program
Sponsored by the Social Security Advisory Board
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Participant Biographies

Romina Boccia is a leading fiscal and economic expert at The Heritage Foundation, focusing on government spending, Social Security, and the national debt. She is the Grover M. Hermann research fellow in federal budgetary affairs and deputy director of the Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies. Boccia often advises members of Congress and their staffs on Social Security and fiscal issues, and she has testified before congressional committees. She is widely published and quoted in newspapers and magazines, and she is a regular guest expert on national and international television programs. Boccia received her master's and bachelor's degrees in economics from George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax, Va. Prior to joining Heritage, Boccia was a policy analyst with the Independent Women's Forum. Originally from Augsburg, Germany, Boccia grew up with a single mom with disabilities and she was a care taker for children with disabilities before working in public policy.

Ken Brown is a Team Leader in the Office of Supplemental Security Income and Program Integrity Policy in the Office of Income Security Programs at the Social Security Administration. He has worked in policy since 1986, primarily in the Supplemental Security Income program. He has held increasingly responsible leadership positions in the agency over that time. Ken received a B.A. from the Johns Hopkins University and a J.D., magna cum laude, from the University of Baltimore School of Law. He has been a frequent speaker at Maryland State Bar Association continuing legal education programs and at national conferences and seminars on Social Security policy issues.

Stacy Braverman-Cloyd is the Deputy Director of Government Affairs for the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR). In her role at NOSSCR, Ms. Cloyd advocates for laws, regulations, policies, and public perceptions that preserve and strengthen Social Security. Prior to working at NOSSCR, Ms. Cloyd was an attorney at a nonprofit legal clinic in Washington, DC, where she represented low-income individuals in a variety of pre- and post-eligibility Social Security and other public benefits matters, as well as rental housing cases. She also served as the senior domestic policy analyst at Bread for the World Institute, an anti-hunger and anti-poverty advocacy organization. Ms. Cloyd graduated from Smith College and received her law degree and a Master's degree in urban planning from the University of Michigan.

Anne DeCesaro has returned to the Human Resources Subcommittee as its staff director where she previously served as professional staff from 2011 to 2014. In between she was the lead staffer on the House Agriculture Committee subcommittee on nutrition which

oversees the nation's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps. Earlier in her career she spent a number of years at the Office of Management and Budget and the Social Security Administration. She received her bachelor's degree from Saint Mary's College and her master's degree from The Johns Hopkins University.

Manasi Deshpande is Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics and the College at The University of Chicago specializing in public finance and labor economics. Her award winning dissertation research focused on the effects of disability insurance. She was a member of the Social Security Advisory Board's 2014 Disability Policy Advisory Panel on Continuing Disability Reviews. She earned her Ph.D. in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Lisa Ekman currently serves as Director of Government Affairs for the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives (NOSSCR). In that capacity, she represents the organization to congress, the administration, and advocacy coalitions in matters of importance to people with disabilities pertaining to the Social Security disability programs. Prior to her current position, she was the Director of Federal Policy for Health & Disability Advocates. Ms. Ekman is also President of Ekman Advocates for Progress, LLC, a disability policy consulting firm. She provides advice to and advocacy on behalf of clients in matters pertaining to disability policy, including technology policy. She currently serves as a policy consultant to the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD). Ms. Ekman started her disability policy career as a Presidential Management Intern at the Social Security Administration, where she worked on the development and implementation of the Ticket to Work Program. She later went on to serve as a Policy Analyst for the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel. Ms. Ekman also served as a Disability Advisor to U.S. Senators Edward M. Kennedy, Tom Harkin, and Jim Jeffords on the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee. After her time on the Hill, she served as a Senior Policy Analyst in Legislative Affairs for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities before returning to school to earn her law degree. Ms. Ekman received her J.D., cum laude, from Georgetown University, her Masters in Social Work from the University of Denver, and a Bachelors in Communications from Northwestern University.

Howard H. Goldman MD PhD is Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Maryland, School of Medicine. He is a mental health policy researcher who serves as editor of *Psychiatric Services*. Goldman also served as the Senior Scientific Editor of *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General* for which he was awarded the Surgeon General's Medallion. He is an elected member of the National Academy of Social Insurance as well as the Institute of Medicine (IOM). Since 2009 Goldman has chaired a standing committee of the IOM providing advice to the Social Security Administration on disability policy.

Daniel L. Hatcher is a professor of law at the University of Baltimore. Prior to joining the faculty in 2004, Hatcher was in a statewide position with the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau, serving as the assistant director of advocacy for public benefits and economic stability. He previously worked as a staff attorney for Legal Aid in the Baltimore Child Advocacy Unit representing abused and neglected children, and he represented adult clients all poverty law matters – including public benefits, housing, consumer and family law issues. He was also a senior staff attorney with the Children's Defense Fund where he worked on policy development and legislative advocacy in areas affecting child and family poverty. Hatcher has testified before Congress, the Maryland General Assembly and in other governmental proceedings regarding several issues affecting children and low-income individuals and families. He is the author of the recently published book, "The Poverty Industry: The Exploitation of America's Most Vulnerable Citizens."

Jeffrey Hemmeter is the deputy director of the Office of Program Development in the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support at the Social Security Administration. He is an economist whose research focuses on Supplemental Security Income recipients, especially children and youth. He is the project officer for SSA's Promoting Readiness of Minors in SSI evaluation and worked on the Youth Transition Demonstration project. He also conducts research on SSA policies and beneficiaries, including the long-term outcomes of SSA's medical continuing disability reviews and age-18 redeterminations.

Ezra Levin is the Corporation for Enterprise Development's Associate Director of Government Affairs. In this role, he researches and develops federal policies and helps shape CFED's policy advocacy strategy in order to expand financial security and economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income Americans. Previously, Ezra served as Deputy Policy Director for Congressman Lloyd Doggett, Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources. While on Capitol Hill, he covered a wide range of domestic social policy issues, including the EITC, the American Opportunity Tax Credit, TANF, SNAP, unemployment, education and labor issues. On leave from Congress, he directed Congressman Doggett's field operation during the 2010 election. Prior to his federal policy and political work, Ezra served as an AmeriCorps VISTA in the Homeless Services Division of the San Jose Housing Department. Ezra sits on the Board of Directors of the National Coalition for the Homeless, and he holds a Bachelor of Arts from Carleton College and a Master in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

Leslie Jose Lyons is the Program Director for nationwide Social Security Advocacy Management Services for the Public Consulting Group, Inc. (PCG), and has been in the leadership role since January of 2008. PCG provides management consulting and technology services to help public sector education, health, human services, and other government clients achieve their performance goals and better serve populations in need. Social Security Advocacy Management Services is dedicated to providing Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Disability Insurance representation and advocacy

work for low income Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, General Relief populations, Health Care plans and Child Welfare agencies throughout the country. Ms. Lyons' in-depth knowledge of the Social Security disability program and its interactions with both the private and public sector began in 1998 and includes working directly with over 15 state and county Human Service agencies. Ms. Lyons' role includes overseeing and directing the operations of the Social Security Advocacy Management Services program to ensure that program goals and objectives are met. Ms. Lyons' expertise includes operational excellence with a focus on innovative IT solutions, data analytics and leadership training that ensures PCG clients receive effective and successful outcomes. Ms. Lyons has a Bachelor's in Business Management from Lewis Clark State College and an ILR Employment and Disability Institute Certificate in Benefits and Work Incentives Planning and Assistance from Cornell University.

Ted McCann is Assistant to the Speaker for Policy managing welfare, education, workforce, pension, and Social Security issues for Speaker of the House Paul Ryan. Previously, he was the Staff Director for the Social Security Subcommittee of the House Ways and Means Committee under Speaker Ryan's chairmanship. In that capacity he negotiated and drafted the Social Security Benefit Protection and Opportunity Enhancement Act of 2015 as part of the Bipartisan Budget Act, which included the largest improvement to Social Security's finances since the 1983 reforms. Prior to his tenure at Ways and Means, Ted worked as a Budget Analyst for the Republican staff of the House Budget Committee. He developed Speaker Ryan's recent project on Expanding Opportunity in America and was instrumental in the development of the Roadmap for America's Future in 2010 and Speaker Ryan's poverty agenda over the past decade. Ted has served as a Congressional European Parliament Initiative Fellow with the Bertelsmann Foundation and a Leonine Forum Fellow, and he volunteers with Catholic Charities. He studied at the Naval War College and earned his B.A. in Foreign Affairs and Economics from Miami University.

LaDonna Pavetti is the Vice President for Family Income Support Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. In this capacity, she oversees the Center's work analyzing poverty trends and assessing the nation's income support programs, including the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Before joining the Center in 2009, Dr. Pavetti spent 12 years as a researcher at Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., where she directed numerous research projects examining various aspects of TANF implementation and strategies to address the needs of the hard-to-employ. She has also served as a researcher at the Urban Institute, a consultant to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on welfare reform issues, and a policy analyst for the District of Columbia's Commission on Social Services. In addition, for several years she was a social worker in Chicago and Washington, DC. Dr. Pavetti has an A.M. in social work from the University of Chicago and a Ph.D. in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Chris Rodriguez is the Senior Public Policy Advisor for National Disability Institute (NDI). Chris has extensive experience working on behalf of individuals with disabilities

both on the state and national levels. Prior to joining NDI, he worked for Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc. as director of governmental affairs and media relations. He has also worked for UCP National, the National Association of Councils for Developmental Disabilities, and The Arc of Texas. Chris earned a bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in Public Affairs from the University of Texas, concentrating on Social and Economic Policy as well as Disability Studies. His drive to assist individuals with disabilities is a result of his personal experience with disability: Chris is the younger brother to an individual with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Jim Sears has been an economist in Social Security Administration's Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics since 1998. His research focuses mainly on low-income populations served by SSA programs. He has contributed to outreach for Medicare Savings programs, estimated eligibility for Extra Help under Medicare Part D, and evaluated several possible reforms for SSI. He currently maintains a Financial Eligibility Model, which links Survey of Income and Program Participation data with SSA administrative records. This model allows him to study the distributional consequences of possible reforms including changes to the treatment of in-kind support and maintenance under SSI. He studied economics at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

T.J. Sutcliffe is the Director of Income and Housing Policy at The Arc of the U.S., the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Ms. Sutcliffe specializes in federal public policy related to Social Security, income support, housing, and antipoverty initiatives. She co-chairs the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Social Security Task Force and the CCD Housing Task Force and serves on the CCD Board as a Director-At-Large. Ms. Sutcliffe's prior experience includes local-level public policy advocacy with and on behalf of people experiencing disability and homelessness in Washington, D.C., and public health research on a variety of topics. She is a member of the National Academy of Social Insurance and a Commissioner on the D.C. Access to Justice Commission. Ms. Sutcliffe has a Masters of Social Work from The Catholic University of America and a Bachelor of Arts from Johns Hopkins University, *cum laude*.

Bernard Wixon is an economist with the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics, at the Social Security Administration. He has many years of experience serving as a project leader for teams that constructed and used microsimulation models to analyze both retirement and disability programs, especially effects on vulnerable subgroups. Some publication topics include: SSA's disability determination process, reforms to the SSI benefit structure, factors underlying disability applications, the retirement earnings test, and earnings sharing. This work is typically based on data from the CPS, the SIPP, and various SSA administrative files. For several years Bernie was Senior Policy Advisor for the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel. He received his M.A. in economics from the George Washington University.