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Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

WR 0605-0005365

May 17, 2006

The Honorable Jo Anne B. Barnhart
Commissioner of Social Security
Social Security Administration
500 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Commissioner Barnhart:

Thank you for providing testimony for the Social Security Subcommittee hearing examining the service delivery challenges facing the Social Security Administration (SSA). I appreciated your interest in my questions about Disabled Adult Child (DAC) beneficiaries. I have the following additional questions, for which I seek your responses in order to complete the hearing record:

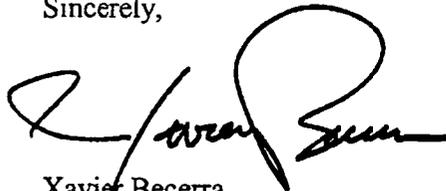
1. How many DAC beneficiaries are there? Could you provide subtotals according to the basis of their entitlement – i.e. by a parent's retirement, disability or death? How many received SSI benefits prior to their DAC entitlement?
2. How does SSA ensure that potential DAC beneficiaries, their parents or other guardians – as well as community organizations and others who work with them – are aware of the availability of this benefit? Please describe all outreach and informational activities conducted by SSA to alert potential beneficiaries, their parents or other representatives (e.g. guardians, representative payees or trustees), and community organizations who work with this population.
3. When a worker applies for Social Security retirement or disability benefits, or a spouse applies for survivor benefits, does SSA probe for whether there might be a potentially eligible DAC beneficiary? If so, is this true for all application settings – field office, telephone, and on-line? If not, why not?
4. When a disabled adult applies for SSI benefits, does SSA probe for whether he or she might be eligible for DAC benefits, either at that time or in the future? If the individual is not immediately eligible (because his or her parents are not retired, disabled, or deceased), is any kind of notation put on the file to flag for future DAC entitlement?

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5. Can DAC benefits be applied for on-line? If not, please explain why.
6. Has SSA undertaken any analysis aimed at determining whether all potentially eligible DAC beneficiaries are receiving benefits? If so, what are the results? If not, why not? Has SSA evaluated its outreach activities in order to assure that they are effective and that the DAC benefit is not underutilized? If so, are any additional steps planned to improve outreach?
7. Could SSA and state-administered SSI supplementation programs provide written notices describing the DAC benefit, the grounds for eligibility and the application process to disabled minor and adult recipients of SSI and to appropriate third parties, such as parents, conservators, trustees, and representative payees? Could such information be included with other notices or letters sent to disabled SSI recipients and their representatives? Based on your experience, would written notifications be an effective outreach tool?

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions for the record. We would appreciate your response by close of business, Thursday, June 1, 2006. Please also send a copy of your response to the Subcommittee on Social Security, U.S. House of Representatives, B-316 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515., with an electronic copy (in WordPerfect or Microsoft Word format) to the subcommittee clerk at Alex.Ranson@mail.house.gov. If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact Joel Najar at (202) 225-6235 or Kathryn Olson at (202) 225-4021.

Sincerely,



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress

cc: Rep. Jim McCrery, Chairman, Subcommittee on Social Security
Rep. Sander M. Levin, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Social Security