



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

February 16, 2016

Valerie Jarrett
Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington DC 20050

Dear Valerie Jarrett:

The Co-Chairs of the Social Security and Rights Task Forces of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) write to follow up on your offer to meet with disability groups made at a “big table” meeting in January regarding the proposal President Obama announced on January 5, 2016 to report information gleaned from the Social Security Administration’s (SSA) representative payee database to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) background check system. We write on behalf of those task forces to express our strong opposition to that proposal. The CCD is a working coalition of national consumer, advocacy, provider, and professional organizations working together with and on behalf of the approximately 57 million children and adults with disabilities and their families living in the United States.

We urge the Administration not to proceed with initiating the rulemaking process to adopt this proposal. We oppose this proposal for a number of reasons, including:

- The damaging message that may be sent by a SSA policy change focused on reporting individuals who have representative payees to the NICS gun database. The current public dialogue is replete with inaccurate stereotyping of people with mental disabilities as violent and dangerous, and there is a real concern that the kind of policy change being contemplated will reinforce those unfounded assumptions. This has the potential to undermine the important work that your Administration is doing to promote community integration, fair housing, and employment of people with disabilities.
- We are not aware of any data suggesting that there is any connection between the need for a representative payee to manage one’s Social Security disability benefits and a propensity toward gun violence. We urge you not to promulgate this, or any other proposal to report individuals with mental disabilities to the NICS database, unsupported by evidence that the people being reported pose an actual threat of gun violence.
- We urge you not to proceed with any proposal targeting people with disabilities that does not offer a meaningful opportunity to stop gun violence. It would not serve anyone’s

interest to report people who have no more likelihood than anyone else to commit gun violence but simply have disabilities that necessitate help with managing their Social Security disability benefits.

We will work with Paulette Aniskoff and her staff to schedule a meeting with the appropriate members of your staff. We look forward to the opportunity to meet and discuss our concerns more fully.

Most respectfully,

CCD Rights Task Force Co-Chairs:

Dara Baldwin, National Disability Rights Network
Samantha Crane, Autistic Self-Advocacy Network
Sandy Finucane, Epilepsy Foundation
Jennifer Mathis, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Mark Richert, American Foundation for the Blind

CCD Social Security Task Force Co-Chairs:

Lisa Ekman, National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
Kate Lang, Justice in Aging
Jeanne Morin, National Association of Disability Representatives
Web Phillips, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare
TJ Sutcliffe, The Arc of the United States