



Chairman Tom Cole

*Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,
Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Oversight Hearing – The Vital Responsibility of Serving the Nation’s Aging
and Disabled Communities
February 26, 2015
Opening Statement As Prepared**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Administration on Community Living (ACL) both share a particularly important mission – serving two of the nation’s most vulnerable populations, the aging and disabled communities. I welcome and thank the Commissioner of Social Security, Carolyn Colvin, and the Administrator for Community Living, Kathy Greenlee, for their participation in today’s hearing.

This hearing is focused on the fiscal year 2016 budget request of these agencies as well as a the quality of services they provide to these two communities. While the roles SSA and ACL play in supporting the aging and disabled differ, the services they provide are vital to each community and ought to be held to the highest standards.

With regard to the budget request SSA submitted, it appears you have taken a number of steps in the past year to improve the quality of services available to the public both at your local offices and online. I’m pleased to see that your fiscal year 2016 budget proposes to continue that progress, Commissioner Colvin. I am additionally encouraged by your recent decision to stand up a new anti-fraud office to tackle the constant threat of misuse of taxpayer dollars. Yet, with the number of individuals applying for Disability Insurance at a historically high level, SSA continues to struggle with managing the disability claims workload. I have a number of questions about the actions you’re taking to overhaul SSA’s management of this program. With the Disability Trust Fund on the brink of insolvency, it’s all the more critical that SSA is wisely using the resources Congress provides to improve its management of the Disability Insurance program.

In reviewing the budget request of ACL, what first struck me was the sizeable increase you are seeking, Administrator Greenlee. I am interested in understand what impact these additional resources will have on the valuable program the elderly, the disabled, and their caretakers rely upon. My question for you is what can ACL do within its current level of resources to improve and modernize these services in partnership with the state and local governments and numerous nonprofits that carry out the very work we are discussing today.

I look forward to our discussion of all these matters. At this time, I would like to yield to the Ranking Member, Rosa DeLauro, for her opening statement.

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