



April 24, 2015

The Honorable Sam Johnson
3rd District, Texas
2304 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Johnson,

On behalf of the 1.3 million members of AMAC, the Association of Mature American Citizens, I am writing to extend our strong support for your bill, H.R. 1800, the “Guiding Responsible and Improved Disability Decisions Act of 2015.” This important piece of legislation would make necessary updates to the medical-vocational regulatory guidelines for determining disability.

The medical-vocational regulatory guidelines, or “grid rules,” used by the Social Security Administration (SSA) have not been updated since 1979. SSA relies on these grid rules to ensure consistency and to minimize subjectivity when determining who is eligible to receive disability benefits. However, two recent studies indicate that SSA’s grid rules are outdated and deficient and have failed to evolve along with improvements and advancements made in medicine, technology, and modern workplaces over the years.

Thus, H.R. 1800 requires SSA to update the grid rules by considering new employment opportunities that are now possible thanks to advancements in treatment, rehabilitation, and technology. This bill also requires that SSA consider the true effect of prevalent languages on a disability claimant’s educational profile, in light of recent reports that hundreds of Puerto Ricans were approved for disability benefits because they do not speak English. AMAC believes that updating the medical-vocational grid rules is a critical first step in making correct determinations about what an individual can and cannot do when it comes to his or her participation in the workforce.

Moreover, the Social Security disability program continues to head down an unsustainable fiscal path. With insolvency of this program looming in 2016, Congress must take necessary action to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse wherever possible and to enact responsible reforms that will preserve and protect benefits for individuals who are truly disabled. Updating the grid rules is one easy, commonsense way to modernize the program and prevent the wasteful use of taxpayer dollars.

As an organization committed to fiscal responsibility, AMAC commends you for your leadership and attention to this issue. We are proud to support H.R. 1800, the “Guiding Responsible and Improved Disability Decisions Act of 2015,” and we look forward to partnering with you to save and strengthen this vital program.

Sincerely,
Dan Weber
President and Founder of AMAC