



**SOCIAL SECURITY**  
The Commissioner

The Honorable Jane Doe  
Governor of the State  
Address

Dear Governor Doe:

The Social Security Administration is responsible for the Nation's two primary Federal disability programs: Disability Insurance (DI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Each month, we provide over \$207 million in DI and SSI benefits to over 209,400 [State] citizens. Over the last five years, the disability workloads have grown significantly, and we project that this trend will accelerate as baby boomers continue to reach their most disability-prone years. In addition, entitlement to disability benefits qualifies claimants for medical coverage. [State] citizens with disabilities could not receive benefits without the work of the [State] Disability Determination Services (DDS) in the Department of Social and Health Services.

We provide 100 percent Federal funding for the operating expenses of the [State] DDS and the other 53 State agencies in the country that make the medical determinations for us. As the Senate Finance Committee has described, our relationship with these State agencies is "unique among government programs, and differs from Federal-State grant-in-aid programs in that there is no need for specific State implementing legislation, [and] the costs of making the determinations and other aspects of related operations are paid wholly from the disability trust fund in the case of the disability insurance program, and from general revenues in the case of the supplemental security income program."

In partnership with the DDSs, we are pursuing many initiatives to improve and expedite our disability processes. For example, working together, we are making significant progress in reducing the backlog of cases awaiting hearings by administrative law judges. We continue to transition claims processing to a fully electronic environment, enabling your DDS to make quality decisions at the earliest point possible in the claims process. We recently began implementing the Compassionate Allowances process. This process identifies and recognizes certain cancers and other rare diseases that almost certainly qualify as disabilities and allows your DDS to approve such claims more rapidly. We are doing all we can to maintain robust funding for these programs. We know that every budgetary decision we make now can have lasting effects on the citizens of [State] and the economy.

We can only meet our commitments to the American public with the full support of the DDSs. It is critical that each DDS maintain a well-trained workforce and participate in the development of critical policies and procedures. For that reason, we fully fund all DDS operations to ensure their sustained operations.

If you have any questions about how we are working with your State DDS to provide critical services to the citizens of [State], I urge you to consult with John Doe, the Regional Commissioner charged with administering the Social Security programs for your State. He may be reached at (xxx)-xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

/s/

Michael J. Astrue