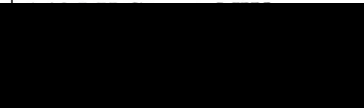


**Labor Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
Witness Disclosure Form**

Clause 2(g) of rule XI of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires non-governmental witnesses to disclose to the Committee the following information. A non-governmental witness is any witness appearing on behalf of himself/herself or on behalf of an organization other than a federal agency, or a state, local or tribal government.

Your Name, Business Address, and Telephone Number:

Katherine Neas
Easter Seals



1. Are you appearing on behalf of yourself or a non-governmental organization? Please list organization(s) you are representing.

Easter Seals

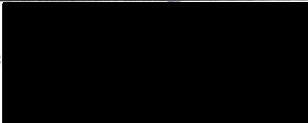
2. Have you or any organization you are representing received any Federal grants or contracts (including any subgrants or subcontracts) since October 1, 2008?

Yes No

3. If your response to question #2 is "Yes", please list the amount and source (by agency and program) of each grant or contract, and indicate whether the recipient of such grant or contract was you or the organization(s) you are representing.

US Department of Labor
Senior Community Service Employment Program
FY 2011 \$23,091,005

Signature



Date:

3/26/12

Chairman Rehberg and Ranking Member DeLauro, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify. I am Katy Neas, Senior Vice President for Government Relations at Easter Seals.

Easter Seals is a private, non-profit organization that provides exceptional services, education, outreach, and advocacy so that people living with disabilities or other special needs and their families can live, learn, work and play in our communities. Through a network of 73 affiliates, Easter Seals served 1.6 million children and adults with disabilities in 2010. This rich and long history of serving people with disabilities of all ages confirms the federal supports under your jurisdiction make in the life of a person with a disability.

Easter Seals shares the urgency for the federal government to be fiscally responsible and bring our national economic situation into balance. At the same time, we know that people with disabilities disproportionately rely on government services to live, learn and work in their communities. These services were created by government because the private market place would not meet the unique needs of people with disabilities.

While there are multiple programs of importance to Easter Seals and people with disabilities, I would like to focus on two programs under your jurisdiction that touch both ends of the age spectrum. The first is Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the second is the Senior Community Service Employment Program or SCSEP.

Every year, we as a nation fail to identify more than one million children, all under the age of five, who have a disability or are at risk for developmental delay. Programs that diagnose and treat children with special needs before the age of five can make sure kids start school on par with their peers, and have an equal chance to achieve their dreams. But these programs are chronically underfunded.

The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center finds that more than 1.6 million, or 13 percent of birth to 3 year olds have delays that would make them eligible according to criteria commonly used by the states. Today, Part C serves less than 3 percent of children under the age of 3.

In fiscal year 2012, Congress increased funding for Part C by \$5 million, for a total of \$442 million. This \$5 million allows states to maintain their services without additional reductions. We thank you for these additional resources and urge you to continue this trend in Fiscal 2013.

SCSEP is the only federal employment program targeted at older Americans to help them find jobs. Through the program, low-income jobseekers, 55 years old or older, are assigned to paid community service work opportunities where they develop new job skills and work experience that help lead to permanent employment. Priority is given to unemployed veterans and jobseekers with disabilities.

Easter Seals leveraged its employment expertise assisting jobseekers and veterans with disabilities to secure a national SCSEP contract in 2003. Easter Seals operates programs in seven states, including Alabama, Connecticut, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Oregon and Utah. Nationally, Easter Seals has helped nearly three thousand low-income, unemployed Americans secure jobs in their communities, including successful placements in the retail, hospitality, banking, electronics, manufacturing, legal, and transportation industries.

Funding for SCSEP is needed now more than ever. Experts predict that older workers will account for an increasingly large portion of the available workforce in the decades ahead. In addition, the Government Accountability Office reported in a recent study (GAO-12-76) that older Americans have been hit hard by the recession. The GAO noted that “when older workers lose a job they are less likely to find other employment” and that older adults, 55 and older, “have insufficient time to rebuild their depleted retirement savings.” Less than one percent of eligible unemployed older adults are served through SCSEP based on current funding levels. Your support for \$600 million in FY 2013 will help ensure more unemployed seniors have access to tools and supports to help them succeed in the workplace.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input and we look forward to working with you as the appropriations process moves forward.

Katherine (Katy) Beh Neas

Senior Vice President, Government Relations

Easter Seals Office of Public Affairs (National & Washington, D.C.)

Katy Beh Neas is Easter Seals' point person on government relations activities. Mrs. Neas monitors and analyzes federal legislation and regulations affecting children with disabilities and their families, particularly in the areas of autism, early intervention, early childhood education, special education and budget and appropriations. She also develops and implements strategies to influence Congress, federal agencies, and others to increase opportunities for young children with disabilities and their families.

As Senior Vice President, Government Relations, Neas leads efforts a staff of lobbyists to develop and achieve Easter Seals' federal and state public policy goals. Neas has been a member of Easter Seals' Government Relations team since January 1995. She has served as one of three co-chairs of the Education Task Force of the national disability coalition, Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, since 1996 and oversees the advocacy efforts of the 50 organizations that volunteer on the task force. In addition, she is an officer of the CCD Board of Directors.

She has co-authored, with the Center for Law and Social Policy, several policy papers and reports on early education and care opportunities for children with disabilities, including "Coming Together for Children with Disabilities State Collaboration to Support Quality Inclusive Child Care." Prior to Easter Seals, Neas was the associate director of the American Association of University Affiliated Programs for persons with Developmental Disabilities. She also was legislative staff to Chairman Sen. Tom Harkin (D.-Iowa) of the Senate Subcommittee on Disability Policy between 1987 and 1991, where she worked on all disability legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). She is a graduate of Georgetown University.