

Expand Health Care Access for Individuals with Disabilities

Cosponsor the Bipartisan, Bicameral Stop the Wait Act (H.R. 883)

Cosponsors (90): *Fitzpatrick, Van Duyne, Smith, Barragán, Beyer, Bishop, Blumenauer, Bonamici, Bowman, Boyle, Brownley, Carbajal, Cárdenas, Carson, Cartwright, Casar, Case, Castor, Castro, Chu, Cicilline, Clarke, Cleaver, Cohen, Courtney, Crow, D. Davis, DeGette, DeLauro, DeSaulnier, Dingell, Escobar, Espaillat, Evans, Leger Fernandez, Fletcher, Garamendi, C. Garcia, S. Garcia, Gonzalez, Green, Grijalva, Hayes, Higgins, Jackson Lee, Jayapal, H. Johnson, Keating, Khanna, Kilmer, Krishnamoorthi, Larson, B. Lee, Lieu, Manning, McBeth, McCollum, Meng, Moore, Nadler, Napolitano, Neguse, Norton, Panetta, Pingree, Pocan, Porter, Pressley, Quigley, Raskin, Sánchez, Scanlon, Schakowsky, Schiff, D. Scott, Sewell, Sherman, Takano, B. Thompson, Titus, Tonko, R. Torres, Trahan, Trone, Veasey, Velazquez, Waters, Watson Coleman, Wild, Williams*

Endorsements: American Association of People with Disabilities, UnidosUS, The Arc, Autism Society of America, Little Lobbyists, American Lung Association, American Council of the Blind, National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC), National Brain Tumor Society, Muscular Dystrophy Association, The Spina Bifida Association, Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, Epilepsy Foundation, Solve M.E./Solve Long COVID Initiative, COVID-19 Health and Safety Taskforce (CHeST), Pandemic Patients, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), National Disability Institute, Families USA, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Social Security Works, Strengthen Social Security Coalition, Alliance for Retired Americans, Justice in Aging, Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA), National Organization of Social Security Claimant Representatives (NOSSCR), National Association of Disability Representatives (NADR), Paralyzed Veterans of America, Special Needs Alliance, American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), American Association on Health and Disability, Center for Law and Social Policy, Lakeshore Foundation, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, Public Citizen, Center for Medicare Advocacy, and Medicare Rights Center

Dear Colleague,

Individuals who have worked for most of their adult lives and have developed a disability can be eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), an insurance benefit that every working American pays into with each paycheck. But in an outrageous loophole, individuals who have been determined to be disabled after going through what is often a long process, are barred from receiving payments for the period beginning 5 months after the onset of their disability. The first 5 months of disability are ineligible for compensation. They must also wait 29 months—a 24-month waiting period after the start of their disability payments—to receive health insurance through Medicare.

These waiting periods only serve to harm the health of individuals with disabilities and delay the support they need because of their diseases or disabilities. In 2018 alone, about 16 thousand workers with disabilities died during the 5-month waiting period and about 56 thousand workers with disabilities died waiting for Medicare coverage.

The Stop the Wait Act directs the Social Security Administration to phase out the 5-month waiting period to receive SSDI benefits and allow anyone who is uninsured or unable to afford insurance during the Medicare waiting period to receive Medicare coverage.

In December 2020, the House joined the Senate in approving the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act so that individuals with ALS will no longer be subject to this onerous restriction. I have joined other colleagues who have offered legislation to end the waiting periods for individuals with metastatic breast cancer, Huntington's

Disease, and other life-threatening illnesses. But what we really need is to Stop the Wait for all individuals with disabilities.

For more information or to cosponsor, please contact Darcy Milburn in my office at 5-4865, or darcy.milburn@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Lloyd Doggett