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Honorable Jo Anne Barnhart
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Blvd.
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Commissioner Barnhart:

On behalf of the American Bar Association, I would like to thank you for the time and effort you have committed to improving the Social Security disability appeals system. We look forward to reviewing the full proposal when it becomes available.

As the umbrella organization representing the legal profession in the United States, the American Bar Association has been able to draw upon the considerable expertise of our diverse membership - - claimant representatives, administrative law judges, academicians and agency staff - - to develop a wide-ranging body of recommendations on the disability adjudication process. We believe our recommendations would encourage clarity in communications with claimants, due process protections, and application of appropriate, consistent legal standards at all stages of the process.

During the past year, our representatives have participated in meetings with members of the Social Security Advisory Board and with Deputy Commissioner Gerry. We found the December 2002 meeting with Deputy Commissioner Gerry to be of particular value, and at this time we would like to request a follow-up meeting so that we may continue our discussion, this time with more focus on your proposals. Lillian Gaskin, ABA Senior Legislative Counsel, stands ready to work with you and your staff to schedule such a meeting. Ms. Gaskin can be reached at (202) 662-1768.

Sincerely,



Dennis Archer