

# 2014

# Annual Report

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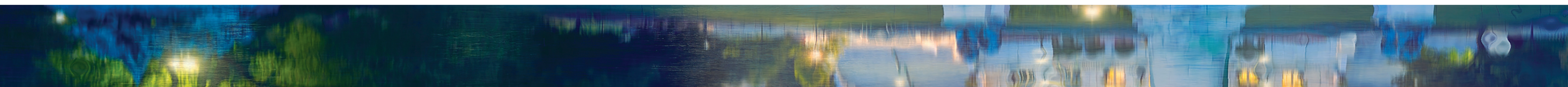
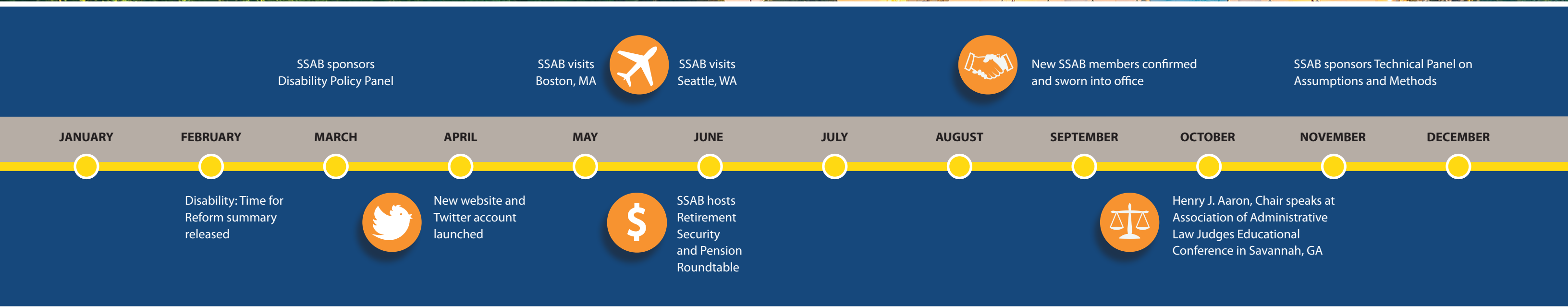
Social Security Advisory Board

Published in September 2015





# A Year in Review





# Message from the Board

We are pleased to publish the 17th Annual Report of the Social Security Advisory Board (SSAB). In September 2014, the Board welcomed three new members: Henry J. Aaron, Bruce and Virginia MacLaury Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution; Alan L. Cohen, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress; and Lanhee J. Chen, David and Dianne Steffy Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Appointment of a full Board was a celebrated moment for the SSAB as we had been functioning without full membership since 2008. Dr. Aaron assumed his position as Chair from Barbara Kennelly, who had been acting in that capacity since October 2012.

In March of 2014, the Board convened an expert panel on disability policy. The Disability Policy Panel (DPP) focused on Continuing Disability Review (CDR) policies and procedures. The members met eight times throughout the year and the Board published the final DPP report in December 2014. The Board commissioned a Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, independent experts in demography, economics and actuarial science charged with providing technical assistance to the Board on the financial projections of the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance and Disability Insurance (OASDI) Trust Funds. The Technical Panel held its inaugural meeting in November 2014 and is expected to release its report in the fall of 2015.

Throughout the year, the Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Carolyn Colvin and other SSA executives briefed the Board on agency operations and perspectives, including Social Security’s financing and solvency issues, disability determination processes, service delivery, the agency’s budget and technology infrastructure, as well as its efforts to develop a comprehensive strategic plan. The SSAB traveled to Boston and Seattle for field visits and visited SSA headquarters in Baltimore to meet with SSA executives and to orient new Board members to SSA.

The Board also consulted with outside stakeholders across the country including researchers, experts and advocates regarding future innovations and current challenges in the nation’s retirement and disability systems. In Boston,

the Board met with representatives from the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College (CRR) and the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) for briefings on their retirement security research.

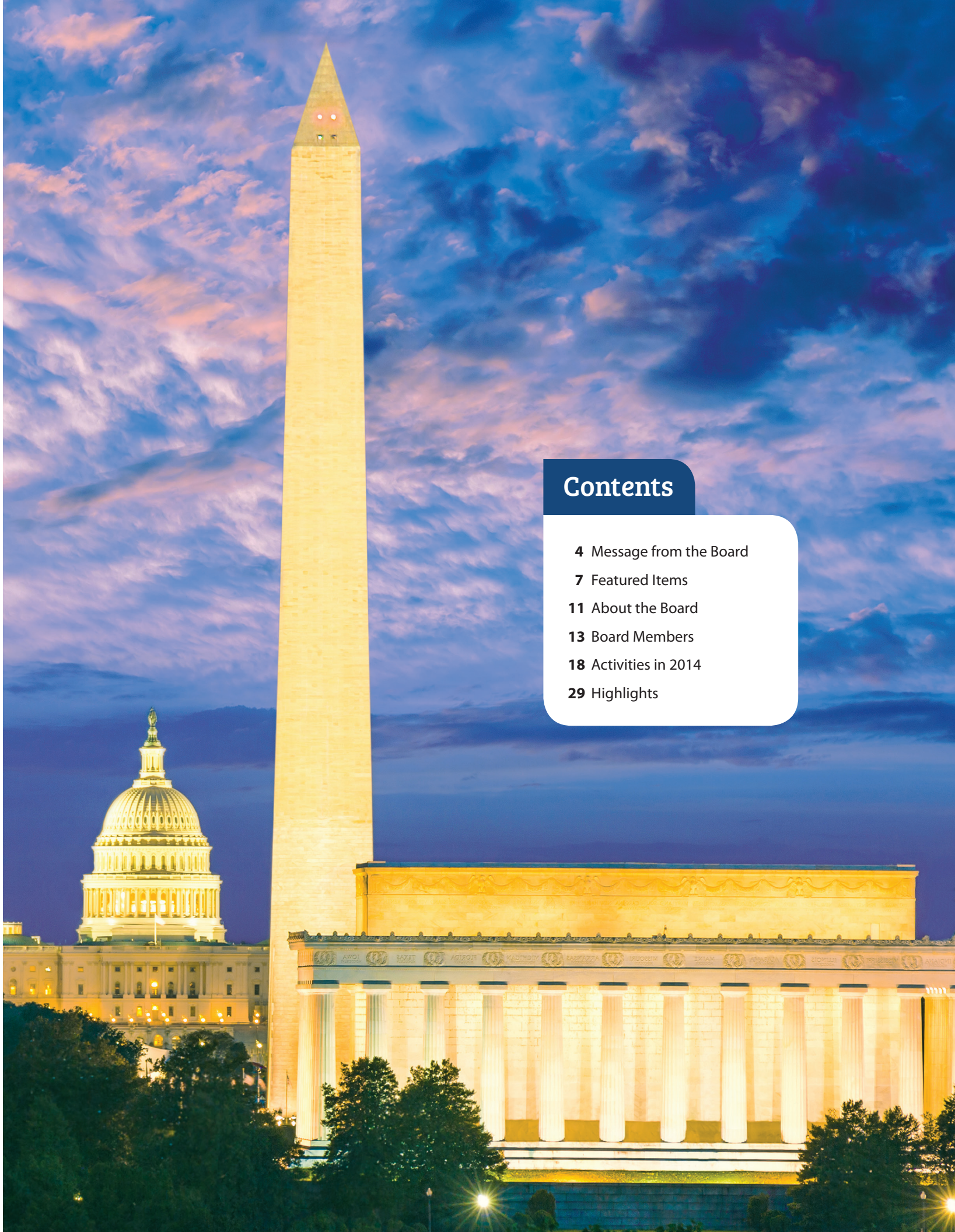
Throughout the year, the Board benefited from the assistance of four SSA detailees serving temporary appointments on our staff: Lynn Fisher, Economist, Office of Research Evaluation and Statistics; Kathleen Romig, Senior Research Analyst, Office of Retirement Policy; Emery MacFarlane, Senior Attorney Advisor, Office of Disability Adjudication Review (ODAR); and Anita Kelly, Executive Officer, Office of the Chief Program Officer, Disability Case Processing System (DCPS).

We are proud of all that we have accomplished this year on a bipartisan basis with the assistance of our staff, detailees, and interns. We look forward to working on behalf of the American people during our remaining tenures on the Board.

- Henry J. Aaron, Chair
- Lanhee J. Chen
- Barbara B. Kennelly
- Jagadeesh Gokhale
- Alan L. Cohen
- Dorcas R. Hardy
- Bernadette Franks-Ongoy

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Henry J. Aaron, Lanhee J. Chen, and Alan L. Cohen at their May 8, 2014 nomination hearing before the United States Senate Committee on Finance (top left) and Social Security Administration Inspector General Patrick O'Carroll swearing in the newest members on September 8, 2014 (bottom left).



Board Chair Henry J. Aaron and Social Security Administration Chief Actuary Stephen C. Goss.



"I am pleased the Senate has acted to confirm all three of these strong and well-qualified nominees...the Social Security Advisory Board provides critical input and perspective on the Social Security program, and it's high time the board is restored to full strength."

Senator Ron Wyden (Democrat-Oregon)

# Featured Items

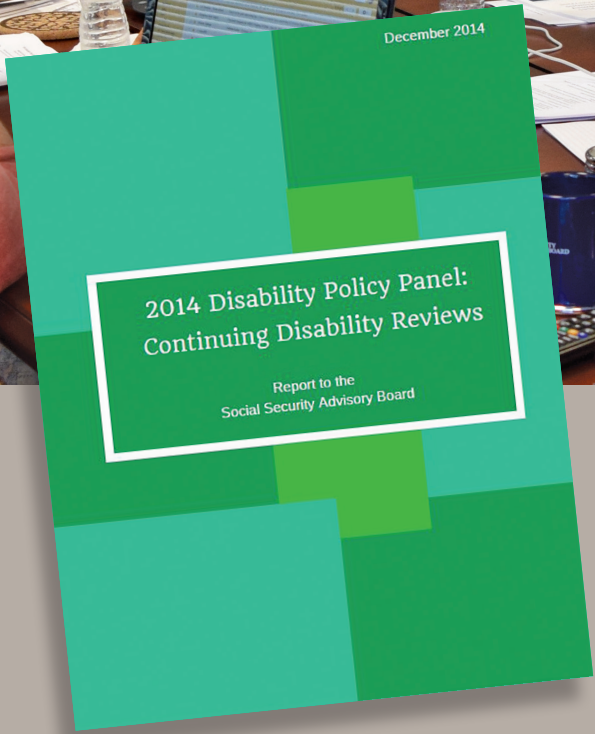
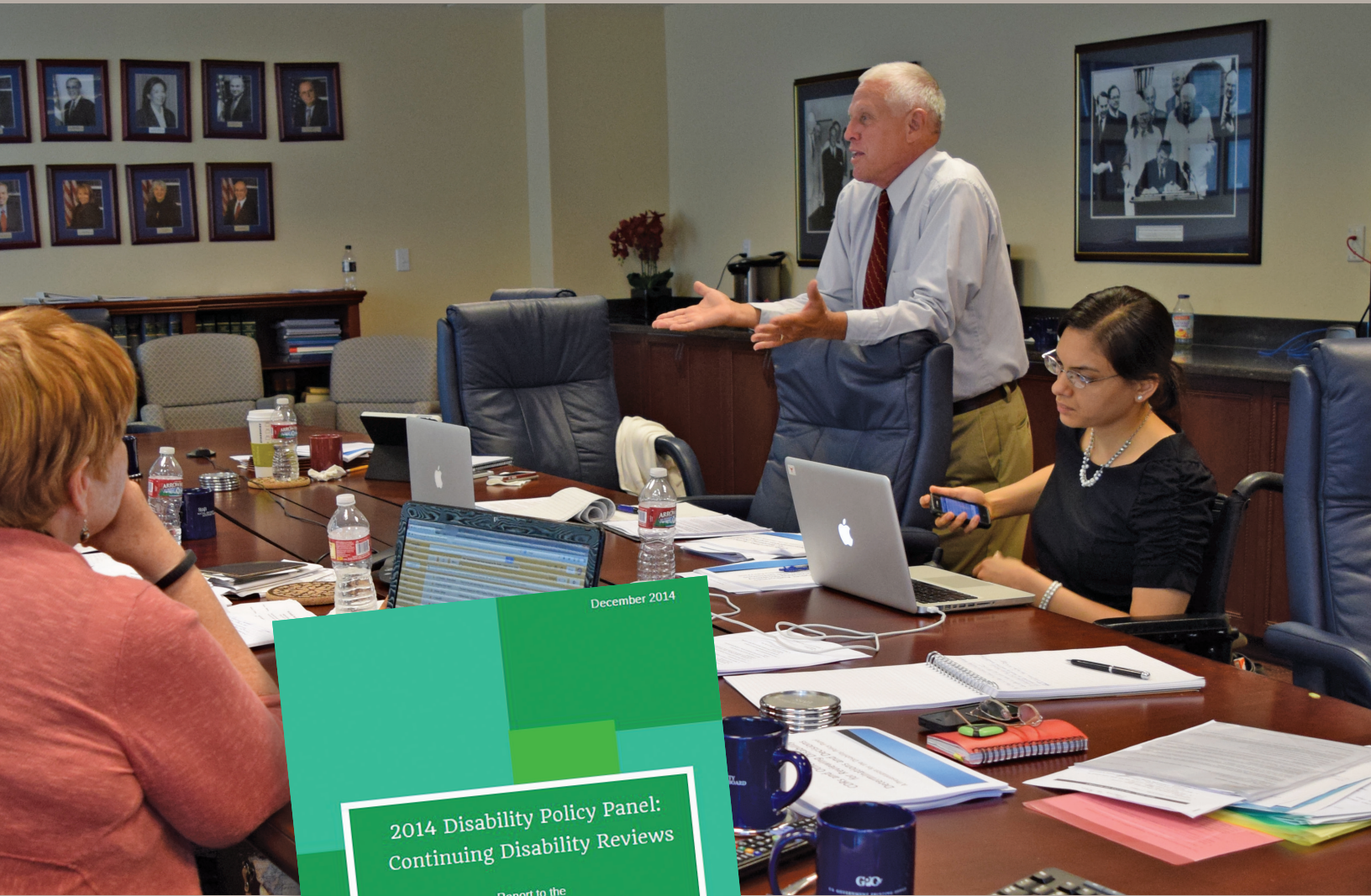
**On September 8, 2014,** the Senate voted to confirm White House nominees Alan L. Cohen, Lanhee J. Chen, and Henry J. Aaron to the SSAB and the new members were sworn in by SSA Inspector General Patrick O'Carroll and Acting Commissioner Carolyn Colvin.

**In November 2014,** the Board convened the 2015 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Method, the fifth such panel appointed by the Board since 1999. The quadrennial Panel is comprised of expert demographers, economists and actuaries and is charged with providing technical assistance to the Board by reviewing the assumptions used by the Trustees of the OASDI Trust Funds, and the methods used by the Social Security actuaries to project the future financial status of the programs.

**The Board established the Disability Policy Panel in 2014.** The concept was to bring in experts with a unique perspective on a policy issue to analyze the underlying legal authority, public policy, administrative process, system constraints, and innovations, and then report on the current process, including possible improvements and consensus on recommended changes. The Board commissioned this panel to consider the way SSA reviews disability claims after benefits have been awarded. The DPP held eight meetings in the Board offices from March through October.



Manasi Deshpande, Ken Nibali, James Smith and Debi Sullivan discuss Continuing Disability Reviews during a Disability Policy Panel meeting.



The Disability Policy Panel final report.

**The Board followed up its 2013 Social Security Disability Forum: Time for Reform,** by publishing a comprehensive summary of the event.

**The Board met with the Acting Commissioner** on several occasions during 2014. Topics of the discussions parallel many in this report, from disability determination and adjudication to solvency concerns and strategic planning; Acting Commissioner Colvin continued an ongoing dialogue with the Board.

**In preparation for its 20th anniversary** in March, 2016 the Board began a history project which includes interviews with former Board Members and Staff Directors who offer their unique perspective and expertise on the boards mission.

Selected Abbreviations

<b>ALJ</b>	Administrative Law Judge	<b>NBER</b>	National Bureau of Economic Research
<b>CDI</b>	Cooperative Disability Investigation	<b>OASDI</b>	Old-Age and Survivors Disability Insurance
<b>CDR</b>	Continuing Disability Review	<b>ODAR</b>	Office of Disability Adjudication Review
<b>CRR</b>	Center for Retirement Research	<b>OGC</b>	Office of General Counsel
<b>DCPS</b>	Disability Case Processing System	<b>OIG</b>	Office of Inspector General
<b>DDS</b>	Disability Determination Service	<b>OLCA</b>	Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs
<b>DOJ</b>	Department of Justice	<b>POMS</b>	Program Operations Manual System
<b>DPP</b>	Disability Policy Panel	<b>RO</b>	Regional Office
<b>DPU</b>	Disability Processing Unit	<b>RRC</b>	Retirement Research Consortium
<b>FO</b>	Field Office	<b>SAUSA</b>	Special Assistant United States Attorney
<b>IVT</b>	Interactive Video Technology	<b>SSA</b>	Social Security Administration
<b>MI</b>	Management Information	<b>SSAB</b>	Social Security Advisory Board
<b>NAPA</b>	National Academy of Public Administration	<b>SSI</b>	Supplemental Security Income



Former Congressman and Social Security Advisory Board member Hal Daub is interviewed for the Board’s history project that will be released in March 2016 to celebrate its 20th year birthday.



# About the Board

In 1994, Congress passed Public Law 103-296 establishing SSA as an independent agency. At the same time, it created a seven-member bipartisan advisory board to advise the President, Congress, and the Commissioner of Social Security on matters relating to the Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) programs. The law went into effect in March of 1995 and the Board held its first meeting in March of 1996.

Functions of the Board	
1	Analyze the nation’s retirement and disability systems and make recommendations with respect to how the Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance program and the SSI program, supported by other public and private systems, can most effectively assure economic security.
2	Study and make recommendations relating to the coordination of programs that provide access to health care with programs described in paragraph (1).
3	Make recommendations to the President and Congress with respect to policies that will ensure the solvency of the OASDI program, both in the short-term and the long-term.
4	Make recommendations with respect to the quality of service that SSA provides to the public.
5	Make recommendations with respect to policies and regulations regarding the OASDI and SSI programs.
6	Increase public understanding of the social security system.
7	Make recommendations with respect to a long-range research and program evaluation strategy for SSA.
8	Review and assess any major studies of social security as may come to the attention of the Board.
9	Make recommendations with respect to such other matters as the Board determines to be appropriate.





# Board

## Members

The Board has seven members. Three are appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate. Not more than two of such members shall be from the same political party.

Two members shall be appointed by the President pro tempore of the Senate with the advice of the chair and the ranking minority member of the Senate Committee on Finance.

Two members shall be appointed by the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, with the advice of the

chair and the ranking minority member of the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Members are chosen on the basis of their integrity, impartiality, and good judgment, and shall be individuals who are, by reason of their education, experience, and attainments, exceptionally qualified to perform the duties of the Board. Each member serves for a term of six years, except that—"a member appointed to a term of office after the commencement of such term may serve under such appointment only for the remainder of such term." (42 U.S. Code § 903)

### Current Board Members



Henry J. Aaron, Chair (D) 2020

Lanhee J. Chen (R) 2018

Alan L. Cohen (D) 2016



Barbara B. Kennelly (D) 2017

Dorcas R. Hardy (R) 2016



Jagadeesh Gokhale (R) 2015

Bernadette Franks-Ongoy (D) 2018

All Board member terms expire September 30th of year indicated.



# Current Board Member Biographies

Henry J. Aaron



Henry J. Aaron, Ph.D. is the Bruce and Virginia MacLaury Senior Fellow in the Brookings Institution Economic Studies Program, which he directed from 1990 through 1996. Dr. Aaron previously taught at the University of Maryland and at Harvard University. He

served as Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and chaired the 1979 Advisory Council on Social Security. He is a member and vice-chair of the District of Columbia Health Benefits Exchange. He is also a member of the Congressional Budget Office Panel of Economic Advisors, the Institute of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the advisory committee of the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, and the visiting committee of the Harvard Medical and Dental Schools. He is a member of the board of directors of Abt Associates and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Dr. Aaron was a founding member, Vice-President, and board chair of the National Academy of Social Insurance. He has been Vice-President and member of the executive committee of the American Economic Association, was President of the Association of Public Policy and Management, and has been a member of the boards of directors of the College Retirement Equity Fund and Georgetown University. He received a B.A. from U.C.L.A in Political Science and Economics and holds an M.A. in Russian Regional Studies and a Ph.D. in economics from Harvard University. Current term of office: September 2014 to September 2020.

Lanhee J. Chen



Lanhee J. Chen, Ph.D. is the David and Diane Steffy Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution; Director of Domestic Policy Studies and Lecturer in the Public Policy Program at Stanford University; Lecturer in Law at Stanford Law School; and an affiliate of the Freeman Spogli Institute

for International Studies at Stanford University. Dr. Chen was the policy director for the Romney-Ryan 2012 Presidential campaign, as well as Governor Romney's chief policy adviser; a senior strategist on the campaign; and the person responsible for developing the campaign's domestic and foreign policy. In the George W. Bush administration, Dr. Chen was a senior official at the US Department of Health and Human Services. He also served as Domestic Policy Director of Governor Romney's first campaign for President and as a Health Policy Adviser on President George W. Bush's reelection campaign. Dr. Chen was also an associate attorney at the international law firm of Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP. Dr. Chen currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Junior Statesmen Foundation and on the Advisory Board of the Partnership for the Future of Medicare. He earned his Ph.D. and A.M. in political science from Harvard University, his J.D. cum laude from Harvard Law School, and his A.B. magna cum laude in government from Harvard College. Current term of office: September 2014 to September 2018.

Alan L. Cohen



Alan L. Cohen, Ph.D. is a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress working on Social Security issues. Previously, he served as Senior Budget Advisor and Chief Counselor for Social Security for the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance from 2001 to 2012. From 1993 to 2001, Dr. Cohen served as

Senior Advisor for Budget and Economics to the Secretary of the Treasury and from 1999 to 2000, he served as the Budget Economist for the U.S. Senate Committee on Finance. From 1983 to 1992, Dr. Cohen was first the Senior Economist, and then the Assistant Staff Director for Budget Priorities on the U.S. Senate Budget Committee. From 1979 to 1983, Dr. Cohen worked as a Policy Analyst/Economist at the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dr. Cohen received a B.A. from Grinnell College, an M.P.P. from the University of Michigan, and a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. Current term of office: September 2014 to September 2016.



## Barbara B. Kennelly



Barbara B. Kennelly is President of Barbara Kennelly Associates and is a Distinguished Professor at Trinity University. She served as President of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare from 2002-2011. Congresswoman Kennelly served seventeen years in

the United States House of Representatives, representing the First District of Connecticut. During her Congressional career, Congresswoman Kennelly was the first woman elected to serve as the Vice-Chair of the House Democratic Caucus, the first woman to serve on the House Committee on Intelligence, the first woman to serve as Chief Majority Whip, and the third woman in history to serve on the 200-year-old Ways and Means Committee. During the 105th Congress, she was the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Social Security. Prior to her election to Congress, she was the Secretary of State of Connecticut. After serving in Congress, Congresswoman Kennelly was appointed to the position of Counselor to the Commissioner at SSA. As Counselor, Congresswoman Kennelly worked closely with Commissioner Kenneth S. Apfel and members of Congress to inform and educate the American people on the choices they face to ensure solvency of Social Security. She served on the Policy Committee for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. Congresswoman Kennelly received a B.A. in Economics from Trinity College, Washington, D.C. She earned a certificate from the Harvard Business School on completion of the Harvard-Radcliffe Program in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Government from Trinity College, Hartford. First term of office: January 2006 to September 2011. Current term of office: March 2012 to September 2017.

## Dorcas R. Hardy



Dorcas R. Hardy is President of D.R. Hardy & Associates, a government relations and public policy firm serving a diverse portfolio of clients. After her appointment by President Ronald Reagan as Assistant Secretary of Human Development Services, Ms. Hardy was appointed Commissioner of Social Security

(1986 to 1989) and was appointed by President George W. Bush to chair the Policy Committee for the 2005 White House Conference on Aging. Commissioner Hardy has launched and hosted her own primetime, weekly television program, "Financing Your Future," on Financial News Network and UPI Broadcasting, and "The Senior American," a NET political program for older Americans. She speaks and writes widely about domestic and international retirement financing issues and entitlement program reforms and is the co-author of *Social Insecurity: The Crisis in America's Social Security System and How to Plan Now for Your Own Financial Survival*, Random House, 1992. A former CEO of a rehabilitation technology firm, Commissioner Hardy promotes redesign and modernization of the Social Security, Medicare, and disability insurance systems. Additionally, she chaired a Task Force to rebuild vocational rehabilitation services for disabled veterans for the Department of Veterans Affairs. She received her B.A. from Connecticut College, her M.B.A. from Pepperdine University, and completed the Executive Program in Health Policy and Financial Management at Harvard University. Commissioner Hardy is a Certified Senior Advisor and serves on the Board of Directors of Wright Investors' Service Managed Funds, and First Coast Service Options of Florida. First term of office: April 2002 to September 2004. Second term of office: October 2004 to September 2010. Current term of office: October 2010 to September 2016.

## Jagadeesh Gokhale



Jagadeesh Gokhale is the Director of Special Projects at Penn Wharton Public Policy Initiative (Penn Wharton PPI). Prior to joining PPI, Dr. Gokhale was a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. Earlier he worked at the American Enterprise Institute as a visiting scholar (2003), the U.S. Treasury

Department as a consultant (2002), and the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland as a senior economic advisor (1990-2003). An economist by training, his main research fields are macro and public economics with a special focus on the effects of fiscal policy on future generations. In 2008, he served as a member of the Task Force on Sustainability Issues for the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board. Dr. Gokhale has written extensively on policy issues including Social Security and Medicare reform, national saving, private insurance, financial planning, wealth inequality, generational accounting, and public intergenerational transfers and he has testified several times before Congress on these topics. He has published several papers in the *American Economic Review*, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *Review of Economics and Statistics* and in publications of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Cleveland Federal Reserve; in the US Budget report's *Analytical Perspectives*; and in newspapers and online media such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The Financial Times*, the *Washington Post*, *American Spectator*, and *Forbes*. Dr. Gokhale is a co-author of *Fiscal and Generational Imbalances* that revealed the US fiscal imbalance to be in the tens of trillions of dollars. In 2010 he published *Social Security: A Fresh Look at Policy Alternatives* which constructs a different method for determining solvency of the Social Security trust funds. Current term of Office: November 2009 - September 2015.

## Bernadette Franks-Ongoy



Bernadette Franks-Ongoy is the executive director for Disability Rights Montana, an organization that protects and advocates for the human, legal, and civil rights of Montanans with disabilities. She manages and oversees the day-to-day activities of Disability Rights Montana and

sets the tone to ensure that the organization's mission to advance dignity, equality, and self-determination is being accomplished. Ms. Franks-Ongoy says, "I was raised by a mother with a disability and a father who did not realize he was a feminist." She lived in an accessible house before the Americans with Disability Act was the law. Her mother's wheelchair could access every room. "After all mom needed to have access to my brothers and sisters rooms with her wheelchair." Ms. Franks-Ongoy is the youngest of eight siblings including a brother with a mental illness. Ms. Franks-Ongoy grew up in the sugar plantation town of Waialua, Hawaii. With the support of Job Corp, Social Security, and other financial aid, she attended and graduated from Chaminade University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. She graduated from the University of San Diego, School of Law in 1983. Her past legal experience includes: law clerk, First Judicial Circuit Court in Hawaii, founding executive director of the Hawaii Bar Foundation, deputy corporation counsel, City and County of Honolulu, and attorney and director of programs for the protection and advocacy system in Hawaii. She is licensed to practice law in Hawaii and with the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Ms. Franks-Ongoy has served as President of the National Disability Rights Network and most recently was a member of Montana's Equal Justice Task Force. Current term of office: January 2013 to September 2018.



# Activities in 2014

In 2014, the SSAB took on research and review of several topic areas considered crucial to the nation’s income and health security effort’s and conducted outreach to those inside and outside Washington DC in order to better understand the real world implications for reforms to social security. Below are descriptions of some of the Board’s 2014 work:

## Disability Policy Panel

Since the SSAB’s first disability report in 1998, the Board has expressed many concerns about the policies and procedures used in the disability decision-making process. These concerns have included questioning outdated policies, noting inconsistent application of policy and the conflicting procedures for the two disability programs. The Board is not alone in its concerns or in calling for a comprehensive review of disability policy. Since 2000, the Government Accountability Office has issued about a dozen reports on problems with SSA’s disability program. SSA has recognized the need for a review of disability policy and discussions with Congressional staff also revealed concerns about inconsistent application and an overly complex disability system.

In response to these concerns and with SSA’s support, the Board drew up a blueprint for obtaining in-depth, expert review of specific disability policies and procedures, and requested recommendations for procedural, regulatory, and statutory change. The Board provided a budget and staff to support this DPP.

The Board chartered the panel to review SSA’s CDR process, including the Medical Improvement Review Standard that must be applied in conducting CDRs. The Board chose the topic due to both the importance of the process for maintaining program integrity and the public and Congressional attention to issues surrounding CDRs. The 2014 DPP held eight public meetings in the SSAB board

room and Board members were welcome to attend and observe these meetings.

The 2014 DPP included the following members: Bernadette Franks-Ongoy, Executive Director for Disability Rights Montana and the SSAB liaison; Manasi Deshpande, Ph.D. candidate, Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and pre-doctoral fellow at the National Bureau of Economic Research; Elaine Fultz, Independent Consultant, and an Associate at JMF Research Associates in Philadelphia (formerly professional staff member, House Ways and Means Committee, Social Security Subcommittee and official at International Labor Organization; and U.S. House Ways & Means Committee); Marsha Katz, Project Director at the University of Montana Rural Institute in Missoula, retired and former SSAB Member acting chair; Renée Landers, Professor of Law and Faculty Director, of the Health and Biomedical Law Concentration at Suffolk University Law School; Nicole Maestas, Senior Economist and Director, of the RAND Center for Disability Research, and Director, Research Department Director of the Economics, Sociology, and Statistics Department; Ken Nibali, retired SSA employee and Associate Commissioner for Disability programs; James Smith, Budget and Policy Manager, Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; and Arthur Spencer, former Associate Commissioner for Disability Programs Policy.

The DPP’s report included the following recommendations:

1. Provide CDR funding that is adequate, predictable, and sustained.
2. Retain the Medical Improvement Review Standard and strengthen its implementation.
3. Strengthen other payment integrity tools.
4. Strengthen links between CDRs and support for return-to-work.
5. More focused research and attention to policy on how CDRs for affect SSI children and youth.



## Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods

In November 2014, the Board convened the 2015 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, the fifth such panel appointed by the Board since 1999. The quadrennial panel is comprised of expert demographers, economists and actuaries and is charged with providing technical assistance to the Board by reviewing the assumptions used by the Trustees of the OASDI Trust Funds, and the methods used by the Social Security actuaries to project the future financial status of the programs. The SSAB covers the panel’s expenses, provides staff support and hosts the Panel’s meetings in its offices. The majority of the Panel’s meetings are public, but it also meets for a limited time in executive session. The 2015 Technical Panel is chaired by Alicia H. Munnell of Boston College and includes: economists Katharine G. Abraham, (University of Maryland), David Autor (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Jeffrey R. Brown (University of Illinois and former Social Security Advisory Board member), Peter Diamond (Massachusetts Institute of Technology ), and Claudia Goldin (Harvard University); demographers Ronald R. Rindfuss (University of North Carolina) and Michael S. Teitelbaum (Harvard Law School); and actuaries Sam Gutterman (consulting actuary) and Joseph J. Silvestri (Government Accountability Office). The Panel is scheduled to deliver its report to the Board in September 2015.

Throughout 2014, the Board prepared for the upcoming Technical Panel by discussing the issues that should be included in the Panel’s charter, possible candidates for membership, and by consulting with key stakeholders including SSA Chief Actuary Stephen C. Goss, and Public Trustees Charles Blahous, and Robert Reischauer. Among the issues brought to the attention of the Board were the importance of the Panel’s chair, the usefulness of including members from non-traditional backgrounds, as



well as members who were very familiar with the process of putting together documents like the Trustees Report. The Board was advised to consider including more than one expert in some issues to facilitate a broader dialogue. In order for the Panel’s recommendations to carry weight, various stakeholders argued, the clarity and quality of the Panel’s presentation of those recommendations is crucial.

## Communication Efforts

An important part of the Board’s work includes connecting with different regions, offices, and groups of SSA employees to discuss experiences, frustrations, and ideas for improvement. The Board also reaches out to management associations, unions, advocates, academics, and private sector organizations throughout the nation to listen to their suggestions and views on Social Security programs. Many of these suggestions from both the public and private sector help inform the Board as it drafts reports and deliberates on its future course of action.

## Retirement Security

The Board’s efforts in 2014 included an examination of the nation’s retirement system. The Board began this effort by hosting meetings and a series of expert panels on retirement security to discuss retirement readiness in America. The very first of these panels convened in June and included Olivia Mitchell, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania; Damon Silvers, AFL-CIO; David John, AARP & Retirement Security Project, Brookings Institution; Norman Stein, Pension Rights Center & Drexel University; and Richard Shea, Covington & Burling law office. The second retirement security panel, held in December, included Virginia Reno, Vice President for Income Security at the National Academy of Social





Insurance; Andrew Biggs, Resident Scholar, American Enterprise Institute; and Jack VanDerhei, Research Director at the Employee Benefit Research Institute.

In May, the Board visited Boston, Massachusetts to meet with scholars from the three multidisciplinary centers that comprise the SSA-sponsored Retirement Research Consortium (RRC). The RRC institutions are: the CRR, the University of Michigan, and NBER. The RRC is funded through cooperative agreements with SSA. The current five-year cooperative agreements run from FY2014 through FY2018. The RRC has three main goals: 1) research and evaluate a wide array of topics related to social security and retirement policy; 2) disseminate information on social security and retirement issues relevant to policymakers, researchers, and the general public; and 3) train scholars and practitioners in research areas relevant to social security and retirement issues. To meet these goals, the centers perform many activities. They conduct research, prepare policy briefs and working papers, hold an annual meeting, and provide research and training support for young scholars. In addition to the trip to Massachusetts, the SSAB staff also visited RRC members at the University of Michigan for a conference.

At the CRR at Boston College, the Board met in May 2014 with a panel comprised of Alicia Munnell, Matt Rutledge, Andy Eschtruth, Rick Miller, and Jean Pierre Aubry. Experts briefed the Board on topics including how prepared people are for retirement and how to reduce retirement security risks by encouraging individuals to increase personal savings and maintain connections to the workplace longer. During meetings with NBER, the Board asked economists Raj Chetty and Brigitte Madrian about retirement savings and incentives to increase savings for retirement. The Board was also briefed by Amy Finkelstein about the effect of the Oregon Medicaid Lottery, including the tremendous media response to expansion in Medicaid, and how this has led to a reframing of the debate on health insurance.

Additionally, the Board met with other experts on retirement security throughout the year, including former Board members Sylvester Schieber in January, Jeffery Brown in March, and Sara Rix, senior strategic policy advisor at American Association of Retired Persons Public Policy Institute, in April. In July, the Board also met with Mark Sarney and Kevin Whitman from SSA's Office of Retirement Policy to discuss the Modeling Income in the Near Term microsimulation model used by SSA researchers to make projections about retirement income, marital trends, social security benefit income, and poverty. These projections allow researchers to study future retirement conditions and the effects of policy changes. The SSAB relied on the expertise of detailees Lynn Fisher and Kathleen Romig, as it worked to draft its forthcoming retirement security report.

### Improving the Administration of SSA's Disability Programs

With the depletion of the DI trust fund expected in 2016, the Board has continued to look for ways to improve the administration of current programs and identify opportunities for reform. In 2014, the Board met with NBER fellow Jeffrey Liebman, Malcolm Wiener Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School; members of National Association of Disability Examiners; as well as Jeffrey Hemmeter and Michelle Bailey from SSA's Office of Research Evaluation and Statistics regarding the status of the DI program, the need for reform and the short- and long-term solvency of the DI trust fund; In addition, the Board met with Theresa Gruber, Chief Program Officer for the DCPS and SSA's Center for Disability and Disability Processing Unit (DPU). In addition, the Board was able to learn more about the DCPS from the Seattle DPU, a small Disability Determination Service (DDS) that processes disability claims for 49 field offices and four DDSs in the Seattle region— including Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and

Washington. Among other administrative roles, SSA's Center for Disability provides administrative support and disability expertise to the Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units in Oregon and Washington.<sup>1</sup> The Center manages 14 independent medical contractors who review cases for the DPU and the Office of Quality Review and provide consultation on complicated medical issues.

### ► Continuing Disability Reviews

In addition to hosting the DPP as discussed above, the Board met throughout the year with agency experts who emphasized the need for more consistent funding for CDRs. We heard from individuals from the Office of the Chief Actuary, including Alice Wade, Stephen C. Goss, Eli Donkar, and Michael Stephens; Michelle King, Office of Budget; Art Spencer, Associate Commissioner of Disability Programs; Martha Lambie, the Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Operations; Judi O'Malley-Oceanak, Office of Disability Programs; Jim Twist, Office of Disability Programs; Ray Wise, Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Operations; and Dan Zabronsky, Office of Quality Improvement. The Board also continued to learn about CDRs from DPP members, including Ken Nibali. Despite the fact that the Budget Control Act of 2011 authorized funding above the discretionary spending caps for program integrity purposes through FY 2021, funding for program integrity activities, including CDRs, has decreased over the past several years. Agency executives expressed concern that continual fluctuations in CDR funding make it difficult for SSA from an operations and planning perspective. The Board was also briefed by SSA actuaries on the return on investment from SSA's CDR process, which varies by benefit type, but in 2012 ranged from approximately 5:1 for adult SSI medical CDRs to over 30:1 for redeterminations for low birth weight children in the SSI program.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CDI units are a partnership between SSA, its Office of the Inspector General and law enforcement. They investigate possible fraud in the DI program and are key to program integrity efforts.

<sup>2</sup> Return on investment is the ratio of total future programmatic savings as a result of terminating

### ► Improving Disability Adjudication At The Hearings Level

In 2014, the Board met frequently with executives and staff from ODAR to hear about its efforts to improve the disability adjudication process. The Board heard from Glenn Sklar, Deputy Commissioner and Jim Borland, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of ODAR, Patricia A. Jonas, Executive Director, Office of Appellate Operations, Gerald Ray, Deputy Executive Director, Office of Appellate Operations; Jae Song, Economist, Office of Electronic Services and Strategic Information, Carolyn Tedino, Regional Management Officer, SSA ODAR, Sue Brown, Regional Management Officer and Fred Gilbert, Center Director, Center for Disability. The Board met with judges Tom Snook, Carol Sax, John Allen, Boston Regional Office (RO), Cynthia Rosa, Linda Stagno, and Dale Glendening. Additionally, the Board met with Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) Peter Martinelli, Marilyn Zahm, Randall Frye, and Cheri Filion.

### ► National Organization Of Social Security Claimant's Representatives

The SSAB staff attended the annual National Organization of Social Security Claimant's Representatives conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. While at the conference, staff heard a keynote address by Mr. Sklar, which detailed the impact of the government shutdown on the hearings backlog, and the increase in the number of continuing disability reviews to be performed in 2014. David Weaver, SSA's Associate Commissioner for the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support, also presented about efforts to update the Dictionary of Occupational Titles.

The SSAB staff also attended workshops on a wide variety of issues affecting DI representatives and claimants,

individuals from DI or SSI benefits (including attendant savings from the Medicare and Medicaid programs) to the total administrative costs of conducting the full medical CDR in a given year. Data on the ROI of full medical CDRs can be found on the Board's website at <http://ssab.gov/Facts-and-Figures/Did-You-Know-Charts/Continuing-Disability-Reviews>.





including ALJ bias, drug abuse and alcoholism, benefit attachment and garnishment, fee arrangements, overpayments, concurrent receipt of unemployment and disability benefits, work activity, and same-sex marriage after the Supreme Court decision *United States v. Windsor*. Staff learned first-hand about the impact of these issues on contemporary disability practice. They learned about the latest products, programs, and services available to help representatives improve their marketing, case management and advocacy at hearings.

### ► Association Of Administrative Law Judges Conference In Savannah, Georgia

On October 7, 2014, Board Chair Henry Aaron spoke at the annual Association of ALJs Conference held in Savannah, Georgia. During his session, he discussed the inherent subjectivity of the disability determination process and many of the cited reasons for wide variances in allowances, and denials among ALJs.

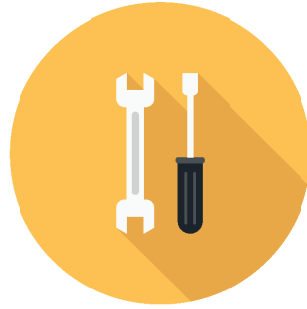
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## Strategic Planning at SSA

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The Board continues to follow SSA's efforts to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that includes innovations in service delivery and other technological and data-driven program improvements. At the request of Congress, SSA contracted with The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) in October 2013 to conduct a study and submit a high-level plan proposing a long-range strategic vision, known as Vision 2025. In 2014, the Board met with Ruby Burrell, SSA's Chief Information Officer and Roger Kodat and Jonathan Tucker from NAPA.

SSA's Vision 2025 review team was led by a seven-member panel of fellows, including Jonathan Breul, Alan Balutis, John Callahan, Tim Clark, Rita Geier, Doris Hausser, and James Huse. The purpose of the Vision was to help SSA



address the service delivery challenges faced over the next 10 to 15 years.

The Agency Strategic Plan that evolved from this process emphasizes a commitment to improving and expanding online service offerings, while continuing to serve customers in field offices and on the phone. It also sets five short-term strategic goals: (1) deliver innovative, quality services; (2) strengthen the integrity of programs; (3) serve the public through a stronger, more responsive disability program; (4) build a model workforce to deliver quality service; and (5) ensure reliable, secure, and efficient IT services.

As SSA continued its development of Vision 2025 and Agency Strategic Plan, the SSAB sought guidance from experts in both the public and private sectors to learn best practices in strategic planning. In April, it met with former Internal Revenue Service Commissioner Charles Rossotti, now a Senior Executive at the Carlyle Group, to hear ideas on strategic planning and leadership. Mr. Rossotti discussed long-term strategic planning that occurred under his tenure. He stressed the importance of a sense of "mission" or "goal" when making strategic plans.

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## Technology

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In the last few years, the Board has monitored SSA's efforts to develop online services, including the agency's rollout of the online web portal mySocial Security. The Board learned from SSA's Office of Budget that an additional \$150 million was requested for service modernization initiatives. This funding would allow SSA to expand online service, roll out more "SSA Express" self-service kiosks, and enhance online authentication and security measures. The Office of Budget expects that the actual funding provided will be closer to \$100 million. In 2014, SSA upgraded its technology in two particular areas: SSA employee training and service to the public.



The Board spoke with Acting Commissioner Colvin and other SSA representatives and with representatives of IBM about best practices in technology and SSA's development of online platforms. The Board also spoke with Steve Kofhal, American Federation of Government Employees representative for SSA employees in the Seattle Region, regarding the importance of providing the public with choices about how to receive services: in-person, via telephone, or online.

### ► SSA's Disability Case Processing System

The DCPS is a national initiative to increase consistency in processing disability claims in the 54 state DDS offices. The design allows for a single system that can track cases, streamline policy changes and allow for more precise management information. With DCPS, the system can order records and exams, keep case notes and set reminders for managing workloads. In the future, SSA envisions that all claims will be processed under a single, online system that will make it easier for a DPU in one state to assist in processing disability claims in other states. SSA staff in the Seattle DPU explained to the Board that currently examiners must learn to use each state's system

In 2012, aerospace and technology developer, Lockheed Martin, won the contract to create the DCPS for SSA. The system launched in its beta phase in three states: Idaho, Missouri, and Illinois. The Idaho DDS was the first national beta site to rollout DCPS in 2012. The target date for a full rollout is the end of Fiscal Year 2018. The original plan was to have the software done by 2016, but this date was pushed back to gather more input from individual states about their unique needs.

Development of DCPS has not been smooth. Initial releases of the system received negative feedback about functionality from SSA end-users in the field and there were problems with cost overruns, leading the agency to



bring in the management and consulting firm, McKinsey and Co., to do a top-down assessment of the project and its administration. The project is now in a "reboot phase."<sup>3</sup> SSA is currently moving to an "Agile" methodology for implementing the project reboot, which will translate to a more collaborative approach for continuous improvement of the DCPS throughout the development and launch process.

During its visit to the Seattle Region, the Board met with staff from a number of different SSA components. Concerns about agency technology were at the forefront of many of those discussions. The Board heard staff concerns that the new electronic representative payee system has been underfunded and underdeveloped over a six-year period. Staff stressed that SSA loses valuable time and resources trying to further develop the system. Staff further expressed that SSA's web-based systems are often not in synch with one another. They stated that this leads to an unreasonable amount of time, energy and resources dedicated to manually inputting claimant information. The Board heard concerns that technology at SSA has been lagging behind the rest of the government and private industry, hindering the agency's ability to function efficiently. SSA staff uses old computer systems and archaic software. When prompted, staff stated that there was a "disconnect" between their feedback and management acting upon their concerns. Although headquarters solicits feedback, staff explained that the deadline for comments occurs too quickly for the feedback to be useful to upper management.

### ► Using Technology To Train SSA's Employees

Visiting the Seattle Center for Automation, the Board learned about the Center's efforts to increase telework capabilities for employees. The Center has replaced workstations with laptops, resulting in cheaper hardware

<sup>3</sup> SSA is also testing other software including Guidewire, which is being tested in Maine and Washington, and Mitus, which is an internal project. Both are being tested in an attempt to expedite the launch of DCPS.





that facilitates telework.<sup>4</sup> Seattle’s training staff briefed the Board on new methods used for training employees, which includes training and video sessions completed via a technology called LiveMeeting. LiveMeeting sessions are interactive and can be broadcast for one person or up to 600 people. Seattle staff stressed the importance of this new model of training—LiveMeeting is independently-guided and reduces the need for intensive mentoring and the likelihood of failed performance.

The Board also heard about SSA’s efforts to improve employee training by using their Interactive Video Technology (IVT) studios. IVT tracks data on progress within the region. Employees sign in with their pin and login I.D. and managers can view their results. On a visit to an IVT studio in Auburn, Washington, the Board learned that core training is provided immediately for all new hires using online tools. This way, employees do not lose time waiting for courses to become available—staff stressed that this old training method was outdated and costly.

IVT courses aim to meet the need of new hires and provide refresher courses. At the Auburn office, employees have worked to consolidate lessons—where there used to be 50 courses available online, there are now 32. Courses now focus more on practice and less on policy. The new courses have practice problems that link to SSA’s Program Operations Manual System (also known as POMS) providing direct and immediate access to the correct policies and source documents.

### ► Using Technology To Deliver Public Service

In 2014, the Board met on numerous occasions with SSA staff and members of the private sector to discuss best practices in delivering public service through technology. The SSAB heard from Seattle RO management about their efforts to market the new mySocial Security portal to the public. The Seattle RO has set up nine public sites placing an icon on public-use computers to help people find online services.

They have also provided assistance at these locations with setting up mySocial Security accounts. The challenge has been that many people get locked out and need to visit a field office for face-to-face service in order to get back in again. The Seattle RO coordinates with large corporations and community groups in the Seattle area to publicize SSA’s online services. Additionally, the Board met with cross-component staff at the Seattle RO to hear concerns and field questions. The topics turned to the subject of obsolete technology at the agency.

The Board was also told that ODAR is increasing technology usage by holding more hearings via videoconferencing technology. In addition, SSA continues to provide feedback to ALJs through the “How MI Doing?” tool. The “How MI Doing?” tool makes information about quality and productivity available to ALJs. Using this tool, ALJs can compare themselves to other ALJs in the office, check remand reasons, and link to related training.

As mentioned above, the SSAB also met with representatives from IBM to hear about Watson technology. Watson is IBM’s cognitive technology that processes information like a human, in that the system can read and understand natural language, important in analyzing unstructured data and it can generate hypotheses based on the evidence. Through dynamic learning, Watson gets smarter by tracking feedback from its users and learning from successes and failures. IBM believes Watson can improve public service by transforming the disability determination process to improve the consistency of decisions across individuals and locations and enhance the accuracy and efficiency of decisions by helping adjudicators make decisions compliant with policy and supported by the case file evidence. IBM was firm in their assertion that Watson was created to assist SSA employees with the disability determination process, not to replace DDS employees’ efforts.

## Social Security Fraud

Although SSA programs continue to show no evidence of wide-spread incidence, fraud gets a large amount of attention in the media and causes many Americans to worry about the safety of their benefits and their Social Security number. The Board takes these concerns seriously and throughout 2014 has monitored the agency and the Office of Inspector General’s (OIG) fraud detection to stay apprised of what actions are being taken to prevent or prosecute fraudsters. The Board heard from Deputy Commissioner, Scott Frey, Office of Legislative and Congressional Affairs (OLCA), and Associate Commissioner, Bonnie Kind, from SSA’s Office of Budget, as well as representatives from CDI units, Office of Inspector General, the Office of General Counsel (OGC), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and the U.S. Attorney’s Office in the Boston and Seattle areas on these important issues. Ms. Kind announced that a National Committee on Fraud, Waste and Abuse will be convened and chaired by Deputy Commissioner for Budget Pete Spencer. She also announced that seven additional field office (FO) units will be created by the end of FY 2015.

### ► Cooperative Disability Investigations

The Board met with CDI units in the Boston and Seattle regions to learn more about the process of conducting investigations. CDI units find cases to be investigated in a variety of ways, including referrals from ODAR, DDSs, and tips from the general public. Facebook and other public records have been largely successful in helping to investigate claims. Investigators are able to look at these sites and gain information before the case even begins. They also have the ability to look at past criminal actions. With technological advancements, CDI units across the country have been able to purchase more gear and readily

investigate a larger number of cases. The Board heard from CDI units throughout the country that the CDI unit has the ability to utilize telephone pole cameras buried in trees, button cameras, Starbucks coffee cameras, and pen cameras. CDI units will sometimes train ODAR and DDS employees to recognize and flag fraudulent activity. This training helps The CDI units include senior DDS and FO staff who typically initiate a need for the OIG to investigate.

The Board learned from the Boston CDI team that for each individual they are able to stop from committing fraud, approximately \$90,000 is saved. For every dollar the Boston CDI unit spends, they save approximately \$16. The Seattle CDI unit is the top unit in the country considering both savings to SSA and arrests and convictions. The Seattle CDI unit saved the government \$340 million last year resulting from their investigations. On May 9, 2014, the Seattle CDI unit was featured on ABC’s Nightline, covering a successful sting operation conducted by undercover SSA agents.

### ► Office Of General Counsel, Department Of Justice, And The U.S. Attorney’s Office

Additionally, while in Seattle, representatives from the regional OGC discussed with the Board SSA’s program to send attorneys to the DOJ to work on SSA priorities. These Special Assistant United States Attorneys (SAUSAs) detail from SSA to DOJ. The primary functions of SAUSAs are to prosecute fraud, identify theft, and work to protect the Social Security number. SAUSAs provide training to SSA employees and local law enforcement about identifying crimes related to Social Security. SAUSAs respond to different components of SSA regarding issues involving fraud. Each SAUSA costs the agency approximately \$152,000 with a return on investment of \$4 to \$1.

<sup>4</sup> The national rollout of this change occurred in September 2014 with a two - to three-year implementation timeline.





## The Windsor Case And Social Security



Since the Supreme Court's ruling in *U.S. v Windsor*, the SSAB has been monitoring how the ruling affects SSA and beneficiaries. Edith Windsor and Thea Spyer, a same-sex couple residing in New York, were lawfully married in Ontario, Canada. Upon Spyer's death in 2009, she left her entire estate to Windsor. Windsor sought to claim the federal estate tax exemption for surviving spouses. She was barred from doing so by Section 3 of Defense of Marriage Act, which provided that the term "spouse" only applied to marriages between a man and woman. The Internal Revenue Service found that the exemption did not apply to same-sex marriages, denied Windsor's claim, and compelled her to pay \$363,053 in estate taxes. In Windsor, the United States Supreme Court ruled Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment.

In 2014, the Board met with Acting Commissioner Colvin, Nancy Martinez, Associate Commissioner for Income Security Programs who is heading the agency's Windsor

workgroup and representatives from SSA's Seattle Office of Public Affairs to discuss the agency's efforts to reach out to eligible same-sex beneficiaries.

The SSAB held conversations with advocates including Susan Sommer, Senior Counsel and Director of Constitutional Litigation for Lambda Legal, Mary Bonauto, Civil Rights Project Director Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, and Web Phillips, Senior Policy Analyst, National Committee to Preserve Social Security & Medicare to hear directly from representatives of the community about how to address issues within the context of social security programs.

## Legislative Affairs And Congressional Relations

One of the Board's main audiences is Congress and it met with Congressional offices throughout 2014. Tom Klouda, Senior Domestic Policy Advisor, Senate Committee on Finance Majority, Kim Hildred, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Social Security, House Ways and Means Committee Majority, Kathryn Olson, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Social Security, House Ways and Means Committee Minority and others came to speak with the Board regarding issues facing Social Security.

Hill staff stressed the importance of hearing the outcomes stemming from Board discussions with FO front line employees and managers. Because of the Board's unique position, the SSAB has the ability to travel across the United States to different Social Security offices and observe first-hand the conditions, quality of service and to hear concerns that SSA employees have. Hill staff said that information the Board gathers on these trips is invaluable to policy-makers.



The SSAB also met with Congressional staff in Boston, Massachusetts and Seattle, Washington as part of their field visits to hear about issues that their constituents were facing, especially concerns regarding SSA's communication with the public. The Board also met with SSA's Deputy Commissioner, Scott Frey, from OLCA to discuss the agency's current legislative agenda.

### ► Social Security Policy Training And Communication With Congressional Staff

It is important for Congressional staff directly serving the public to be aware of SSA's evolving policies and procedures. Congressional staff reported to the Board that while they occasionally meet with SSA's Office of Public Affairs, other agencies, including the Department of State, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the IRS, and Citizenship and Immigration Services, often hold face-to-face meetings. SSA does not hold face-to-face training sessions on new policies and procedures for those in Congressional constituent service roles. SSA holds webinars, which Congressional staff said may help, but staff would like to have more interaction with SSA to learn about updates in policy and where to direct constituent questions. Congressional staff expressed concerns about the lack of communication from SSA about the status of constituent cases. They reported that often the agency is unreachable and suggested that a comprehensive system be developed so that Congressional offices are able to track cases on behalf of constituents.

### ► Disability Adjudication And Fraud

The Board heard from OLCA and Congressional staff that SSA would like to initiate a demonstration project to investigate the use of early intervention programs to assist people to return to the workforce rather than join going on disability benefits. An early intervention proposal developed by the Office of Management and Budget and SSA's Office of Retirement and Disability Policy

was included in the 2015 Budget and would renew SSA's demonstration authority which lapsed in 2005. Without demonstration authority, SSA cannot test the efficacy of reforms to its benefit programs. In addition to early intervention strategies, Hill staff expressed their continued desire to improve the disability system across the board with the goal of stopping fraud as well as improving efficiency and accuracy in awarding benefits.

Hill staff discussed representative payee fraud with the Board, and reiterated that a Congressional hearing held about 10 years ago yielded bipartisan support for changes. Staff pointed to successful programs working with organizational representatives, but stated that detecting abuse by individuals is difficult. Hill staff and the Board discussed an SSA working group assigned this issue.

Additionally, Congressional staff expressed concern about the increase in video hearings, overpayments, closing of field offices and delays in their constituents receiving Social Security cards, earnings statements, and benefit verifications.

## Voices From The Field

Some of the Board's most important interactions are those it has with SSA's direct service employees in FOs throughout the country. In 2014, the Board met with FO employees and shadowed staff as they did public intake in the Seattle and Boston regions. Despite the pressures of growing workloads, FO employees continue to deliver thoughtful and effective customer service. FO employees noted the difficulties of long working days, highlighting that the end of each day is especially challenging as the workload increases. FO management staff expressed concern about mounting tension in the field office because of waiting lines, backlogs and a sluggish economy.







# Highlights

During the year, Board staff continued ongoing work and attended a number of events to keep itself educated on current policy proposals and to better position itself to assist the Board in its work.

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## The Board's History

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As the Board approaches its 20th anniversary, in March of 2016, it has embarked on a new project to document its history. This endeavor will include a formal report of the Board's history, supplemented by a library of interviews of current and former Board members and staff recorded on digital video. The written report will summarize the Board's legislative history, authorizing statutes and bylaws, membership and staffing. In addition, the report will provide a pictorial history. The Board teamed with SSA's historians in 2014 to produce oral histories that have been posted to the SSAB's newly re-designed website. Additional oral histories may be produced in the future.

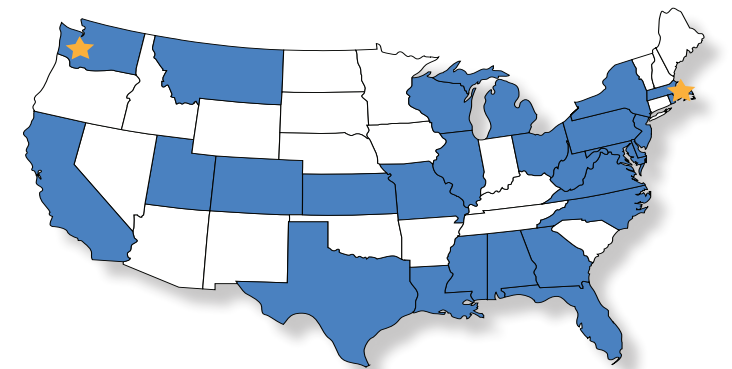
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## Expanding Communication

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One of the Board's statutory objectives is to improve public understanding of Social Security. In meeting this goal, the Board and its staff make every effort to communicate with the American public in a wide variety of ways. We hold regular, open meetings, sponsor policy forums and interactive panel discussions, send out press releases, maintain a vibrant website and recently began using social media to improve our ability to reach a wider audience. Since its inception, the Board has visited SSA facilities in all regions of the country and has touched nearly every part of the agency in its efforts to learn from SSA front line managers and employees. The SSAB intends

to expand on these efforts in the future to reach far beyond Washington, D.C. and create lasting improvements in the public's understanding Social Security programs and related issues. Much of this outreach includes engaging with young adults on the topic of Social Security. Over the past few years, the SSAB has worked to build a robust intern program, develop our Twitter page, and transform our website to include more meaningful educational content.



### Communication

Since 1996, the Board has visited 27 states and 46 cities across the United States. In 2014, the board visited Boston, MA and Seattle, WA to meet with Regional Social Security office employees and managers.



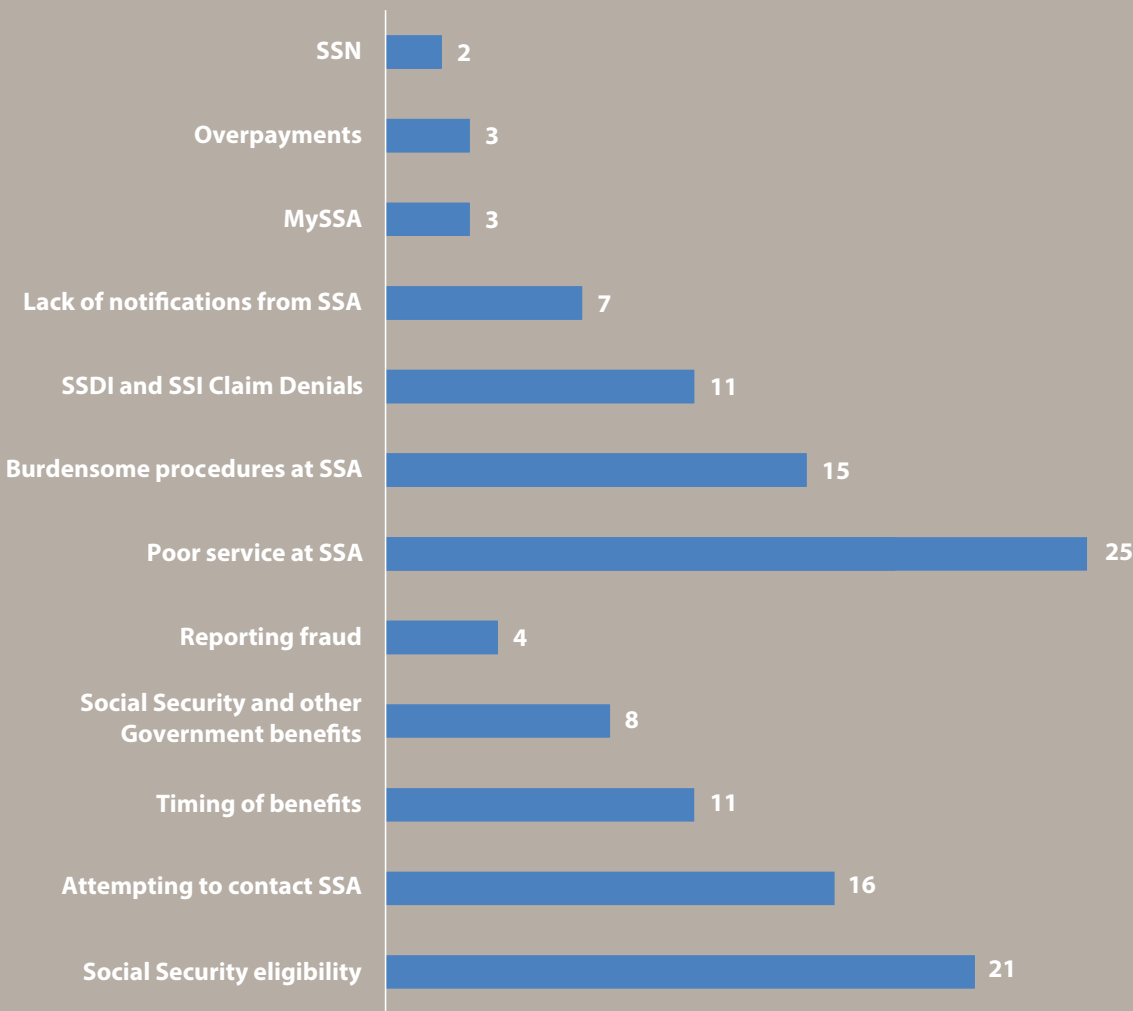
## Public Inquiries

The SSAB staff is contacted via telephone, email, and fax, by individuals who are seeking assistance on Social Security-related matters. Although the Board does not issue decisions on individual claims, it documents the type of inquiry, and assists the public in finding the appropriate office at Congress, SSA, or other appropriate federal agency.

Staff developed a Public Inquiries Guide with instructions for how inquiries of various kinds should be addressed. In 2014, the office received approximately 116 public inquiries of various kinds. The nature of these preliminary contacts is summarized below.

### 2014 Public Inquiry Topics

Number of inquiries SSAB received via phone, fax, email and mail



## Updated Website and Twitter Account Launched



In 2014, we redesigned our website to focus on educating the public about Social Security and we launched a new Twitter account to help disseminate public announcements, meetings and information to a larger audience. The Board kicked off its 2014 Twitter campaign by announcing the addition of new Board members.

## Internship Program

The internship program at the SSAB aims to educate people on Social Security and related public policy issues by encouraging interns to attend Congressional hearings,

policy discussions, and other local events. Interns bring a variety of opinions, perspectives, and bright ideas to the SSAB on the Social Security program.

## Staff and Intern Public Outreach

To reach young adults, the SSAB staff and interns gave presentations about Social Security during the Capital area REACH AJ Hassann Soccer Camp. The Capital Area REACH Program is a local 501(c) (3) charitable organization that is committed to helping young people in the Northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC metropolitan area

become successful in school, work, and the community. SSAB staff volunteered their time at the camp and spoke with camp participants and counselors, providing information and answering questions they had about Social Security.



Capital area REACH AJ Hassann Soccer Camp participants and counselors.

"Many in my generation, and those younger than me, are concerned about the future of Social Security. Reforming the program to ensure its solvency for my generation and beyond is of particular interest and concern..."

Lanhee J. Chen, Board Member



# Staff

# Interns



Claire Green  
Staff Director



Jacqueline Chapin, Ph.D.  
Policy Chief



David Warner  
Management Chief



Ismael Cid-Martinez



Bethel Dejene



Connor Dowd



Joel A. Feinleib  
Staff Economist



Jeremy Elder  
Policy Analyst



Sarah Weaver  
Management Analyst



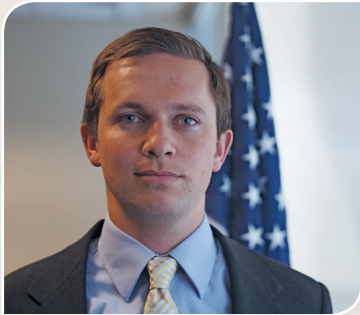
Hong Han



Mohammad Humza



Morgan McKenna



Sterling Laudon  
Policy Attorney



Alec Moore  
Policy Analyst



Robin Walker  
Executive Assistant



Ellen Skirvin



Randy Yiadom



# Publications

## Board Publications

### 2014

#### Reports to the Board

- 2014 Disability Policy Panel: Continuing Disability Reviews, December 2014

#### Reports

- 2013 Forum Summary: Social Security Disability: Time for Reform, February 2014
- 2014 Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program
- 2013 Annual Report, September 2014

### 2013

#### Position Papers

- The Case for Terminating the Benefit Offset National Demonstration, August 2013
- The Online Statement and MySSA Portal: SSA Should Take Additional Steps to More
- Effectively Communicate with the Public, December 2013

#### Reports

- Facing the Challenges -- Envisioning the Future -- Transition Document for SSA, July 2013
- 2013 Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program
- 2012 Annual Report, September 2013

### 2012

#### Reports

- Aspects of Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials, February 2012
- Filing for Social Security Disability Benefits: What Impact Does Professional Representation
- Have on the Process at the Initial Level, September 2012
- 2012 Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program
- 2011 Annual Report, July 2012

### 2011

#### Reports to the Board

- The 2011 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, September 2011

#### Reports

- The Social Security Administration: A Vision of the Future – The First Steps on the Road to 2020, March 2011
- 2011 Supplemental Security Income Statement
- 2010 Annual Report, May 2011

### 2010

#### Issue Briefs

- Keeping The Record Straight – An Overview of How SSA's Data Exchange Program Works, December 2010
- The Representative Payee Program, September 2010

#### Reports

- Social Security: Why Action Should be Taken Soon, December 2010
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2010
- 2009 Annual Report, August 2010

### 2009

#### Issue Briefs

- Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program: A Look Back at the Last 10 Years, May 2009
- Interactions between Supplemental Security Income and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, reissued February 2009
- Need for Review of the Supplemental Security Income Program's Benefit Levels, Asset Limits, and Income Exclusions, reissued March 2009
- Substantial Gainful Activity, April 2009

#### Reports

- Bridging the Gap: Improving SSA's Public Service through Technology, April 2009
- The Unsustainable Cost of Health Care, September 2009
- The Social Security Statement: How It Can Be Improved, August 2009
- 2008 Annual Report, May 2009

### 2008

#### Forums

- Working Toward Retirement Security: Policies to Help Extend the Working Life of Older Americans (presenters' papers and slides), January 2008

#### Reports

- Working for Retirement Security, September 2008
- Challenges Facing the Social Security Administration: Present and Future–Report to the President-Elect Transition Team, December 16, 2008
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2008
- 2007 Annual Report, August 2008

### 2007

#### Reports to the Board

- The 2007 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, October 2007

#### Issue Briefs

- Office of Personnel Management's Role in Hiring Administrative Law Judges, April 2007

#### Reports

- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2007
- 2006 Annual Report, August 2007

### 2006

#### Issue Briefs

- Statement on the Supplemental Security Income Program: Transition from Childhood to Adulthood, May 2006

#### Reports

- A Disability System for the 21st Century, September 2006
- Improving the Social Security Administration's Hearing Process, September 2006
- Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials, May 2006
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2006
- 2005 Annual Report, September 2006

### 2005

#### Reports to the Board

- Overview and Discussion of the Social Security Mortality Projections, May 2005

#### Issue Briefs

- The Impact of Immigration on Social Security and the National Economy, December 2005

#### Reports

- Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon, September 2005
- Retirement Security: The Unfolding of a Predictable Surprise, March 2005
- Board Comments on Ticket To Work Regulations, December 2005
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2005
- 2004 Annual Report, October 2005



# Board Publications

## 2004

### Forums

- The Definition of Disability, April, 2004

### Reports

- Statement of the Social Security Advisory Board on the Congressional Budget Office Social Security Projections, June 2004
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2004
- 2003 Annual Report, May 2004

## 2003

### Reports to the Board

- Introducing Non-adversarial Government Representatives to Improve the Record for Decision in Social Security Disability Adjudications, May 2003
- The 2003 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, October 2003

### Reports

- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2003
- The Social Security Definition of Disability, October 2003

## 2002

### Reports to the Board

- Alternative Approaches to Judicial Review of Social Security Disability Cases, March 2002

### Reports

- SSA's Obligation To Ensure That The Public's Funds Are Responsibly Collected and Expended, March 2002
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2002
- 2002 Annual Report for Calendar Year, December 2002

## 2001

### Reports

- Charting the Future of Social Security's Disability Programs: The Need for Fundamental Change, January 2001
- Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials (Part One), January 2001
- Disability Decision Making: Data and Materials (Part Two), January 2001
- Agenda for Social Security: Challenges for the New Congress and the New Administration, February 2001

- Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon, Revised Edition, July 2001
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2001
- Fiscal Year 2001 Annual Report, October 2001

## 2000

### Reports

- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 2000
- Fiscal Year 2000 Annual Report, October 2000

## 1999

### Reports to the Board

- The 1999 Technical Panel on Assumptions and Methods, November 1999

### Forums

- Implications of Raising the Social Security Retirement Age, May 1999

### Reports

- How the Social Security Administration Can Improve Its Service To The Public, September 1999
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 1999
- Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Report, October 1999

## 1998

### Reports

- Social Security: Why Action Should Be Taken Soon, July 1998
- Strengthening Social Security Research: The Responsibilities of the Social Security Administration, January 1998
- How SSA's Disability Programs Can Be Improved, August 1998
- Supplemental Security Income Statement, May 1998
- Fiscal Year 1998 Annual Report, October 1998

## 1997

### Forums

- A Long-Range Research and Program Evaluation Plan for the Social Security Administration, June 1997

### Reports

- Developing Social Security Policy: How the Social Security Administration Can Provide Greater Policy Leadership, March 1997
- Increasing Public Understanding of Social Security, September 1997







In 1998, President Clinton signed **Greening the Government Through Waste Prevention, Recycling, and Federal Acquisition**, which outlined the responsibility of government agencies to institute recycling programs and to adopt other energy efficient programs. President Bush and President Obama focused attention on energy efficient and sustainable solutions and each challenged agencies to incorporate environmentally aware practices. The Board takes this responsibility seriously and has worked to become a greener organization by expanding our recycling program, purchasing biodegradable non-animal tested cleaning supplies, and using recycled and recyclable paper for publications.





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