

DEAR CONGRESSMAN / DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN

Much has happened lately - you may have noticed. I ping back and forth between shouting into the dark night and just putting my head down and winning the next claim. The middle ground is the focus of this "blast".

If you get this email, you are a current or a past client. As a former client you may have received - or still receive - disability benefits under either Title II or Title 16 of the Social Security Act. If you are a current Social Security Disability client, you are pursuing one or both of these benefits.

Congress has oversight over Social Security law. Over the years that I have focused my practice in this area, changes to the law have occurred infrequently. The program's size and scope discourages major or frequent change. After all, millions receive, and rely upon these benefits. In recent years there has been frequent debate/ and/or concern about the adequacy of program funding. Changes in eligibility, related for instance to beneficiary age and/or program retirement age are often debated. Generally, the debate's baseline is the notion that these programs are valuable and essential.

Until recently. The new Administration has rolled out a series of Executive Orders that owe their genesis to *Project 25*. This "project", funded and developed by the Heritage Foundation, seeks to reduce the size and footprint of the Federal Government. The project recommendations are wide ranging, and reach into nearly every corner of the Federal Government.

The President has chosen in the first weeks of his administration to focus on parts of Project 25 that address many of the hot button topics that formed the debate in the past election - for instance immigration [don't get me started]. Sooner or later, Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid will draw scrutiny. And there are members of Congress that are itching to do their "MAGA" part. There will be bills introduced in this Congressional year that attack Social Security Disability law and programs. Proponents of small [read tiny] Federal government will start with Title 16; SSI benefits, and Medicaid.

Our disability programs have enjoyed broad support over time. This might be a good time to - gently - remind your representatives of the value of these programs. Rather than taking to X or Facebook, I have an old fashioned suggestion. It may be out of style, but please consider tapping out a brief letter or email to send to your Congressman, or Congresswoman.

A short letter, no more than one page [challenge - be briefer than me!], reminding your representative how much you appreciate these benefits, and how critical these benefits are. Perhaps remind them, if you receive Title II benefits [SSD], that you worked, reported earnings, and paid taxes for ten?, twenty?, perhaps twenty five years. Until you became disabled, and no were longer able to: A. Earn a living, and or B. Support your family. Perhaps remind them, if you receive Title 16 benefits [SSI], that you value and appreciate these benefits. SSI was designed to, for example, support people whose illness or conditions either prevented them from entering the workforce, or preventing re-entry to the workforce.

And remind your representative that you are a voter, or perhaps voted for them in this past election cycle. That's what's known as a - gentle nudge.

Hasn't our winter weather been great!? All of our friends and relatives have descended upon South Florida, clogging our airports, roads, and beaches.

Are they leaving soon? Maybe?