

From: Congressman Kweisi Mfume <MD07.noreply@mail.house.gov> To: Ryan.Lawrence@mail.house.gov Subject: Supporting Blind Americans Professional Development – Co-leading Bipartisan Legislation with Rep. Sessions Date: Mon, 22 Jul 2024 15:14:19 -0400 <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=utf-8"><body><!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd" ><html><head><!--ly, 6/2022, tr#252686--> <style id="IQEmailStyle"> /* Client-specific Styles */ body { width: 100% !important; margin: 0px; } .ReadMsgBody { width: 100%; } .ExternalClass { width: 100%; display: block !important; } /* Force Hotmail to display emails at full width */ /* Reset Styles */ body { margin: 0; padding: 0; } img { outline: none; text-decoration: none; max-width: 100%; } br, strong br, b br, em br, i br { line-height: 100%; } h1, h2, h3, h4, h5, h6 { line-height: 100% !important; -webkit-font-smoothing: antialiased; } /*ly, tr#221562, add same margin as margin-block-start/end*/ h1{margin-top:0.67em;margin-bottom:0.67em;} h2{margin-top:0.83em;margin-bottom:0.83em;} h3{margin-top:1em;margin-bottom:1em;} h4{margin-top:1.33em;margin-bottom:1.33em;} h5{margin-top:1.67em;margin-bottom:1.67em;} h6{margin-top:2.33em;margin-bottom:2.33em;} table td, table tr { border-collapse: collapse; } p { margin-bottom: 1em; } table.menu-change a { text-decoration: none; } /* pre-header */ .preheader { display: none !important; visibility: hidden; mso-hide: all !important; font-size: 0px; color: #ffffff; line-height: 0px; max-height: 0px; max-width: 0px; opacity: 0; overflow: hidden; } </style> <style id="IQCustomStyle"></style> <style id="IQMobileStyle" type="text/css"></style> <meta name="viewport" content="width=device-width,initial-scale=1.0,user-scalable=0,minimum-scale=1.0,maximum-scale=1.0" <body id="newsletterBody" class="" data-new-gr-c-s-check-loaded="14.1188.0" data-gr-ext-installed="" data-new-gr-c-s-loaded="14.1188.0"><div id="newsletterContent" class=""> <table style="table-layout: fixed;" border="0" width="100%" cellspacing="0" cellpadding="0" align="center"> <tbody> <tr> <td align="center"> <table class="body-zone bg-change width-change" style="width: 640px; padding: 0; border-spacing: 0;" border="0" bgcolor="#ffffff"> <tbody class=""> <tr> <td class="content-change general-change textedit" style="padding: 0px; font-size: 0px; font-family: Arial, sans-serif; background-color: #f3f3f3;"> <p style="text-align: center;"> </p></td> </tr> <tr> <td class="content-change general-change textedit" style="padding: 0px; font-size: 0px; font-family: Arial, sans-serif; background-color: #f3f3f3;"><table class="banner-change" style="width: 100%; border-spacing: 0px; padding: 0px; margin: 0px; color: #313941; background-color: #ffffff;"> <tbody class="ui-sortable"> <tr> <td style="font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12px; color: #717171; background-color: #e2e1df; text-align: right; padding: 3px 10px 3px 3px;"><a style="text-decoration: none; color: #717171;" href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QC Sign Up | <a style="text-decoration: none; color: #717171;" href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QC </tr> <tr> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table></td> </tr> <tr> <td

class="content-change general-change textedit padding-change" style="padding: 0px 30px 10px; font-size: 11pt; font-family: Arial, sans-serif; background-color: #ffffff;"> <p>Dear Constituent,
 </p> <p style="text-align: left;">Recently, Congressman Pete Sessions (R-TX-17) and I announced that we have introduced H.R. 8878, the Blind Americans Return to Work Act, which is bipartisan legislation that would allow blind Americans to achieve their full earnings potential. </p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p style="text-align: left;">Title II of the Social Security Act provides that disability benefits paid to blind beneficiaries are eliminated if the beneficiary exceeds a monthly earnings limit. This earnings limit, often called the “earnings cliff,” is in effect a penalty imposed on blind Americans when they work.</p> <p style="text-align: left;">For example, the earnings limit in 2024 for a blind person is \$2,590 per month. If a blind person earns more than that threshold, even by just one dollar, they are engaged in substantial gainful activity (SGA).

Under the current law, any individual engaged in SGA is not entitled to ANY Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. This means that if a blind person earns just one dollar over the earnings limit, all benefits are lost. </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> </p> <p style="text-align: left;">The Blind Americans Return to Work Act will eliminate the earnings cliff by instituting a pilot program establishing a gradual two-for-one phase-out of SSDI benefits with earnings over the SGA limit. </p> <p style="text-align: left;">In other words, for every two dollars a blind worker earns above the SGA threshold, their benefits amount will be reduced by one dollar.

With a phase-out model, blind workers will always be better off striving to earn as much as possible, which will facilitate the transition of those workers out of the SSDI system as benefits are gradually reduced.

Through this model, blind Americans will never lose by working. As an added benefit, fewer workers will be earning SSDI benefits and instead be paying into the Social Security Trust Fund, which means a more balanced Trust Fund in time. </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> </p> <p style="text-align: left;"><span
style="font-size: 12pt;">Under the proposed system in this legislation, the
SSDI program will become less complicated. The bill would also make
SSDI rules more similar to that of the Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
program, which will result in less confusion, and the incentive for blind
people to return to work will be consistent and clear.</p> <p
style="text-align: left;">There should
not be any impairment or impediment that prevents blind and visually impaired
individuals from achieving their professional dreams.
</p> <p style="text-align: left;">This
bipartisan legislation is crucial as it would correct a roadblock in current
law that forces blind and visually impaired Americans to choose between their
needed benefits and their own professional development. </p> <p
style="text-align: left;">I want to thank my
colleague, <a
href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QC
target="_blank" rel="noopener">Republican Congressman Pete Sessions, for
spearheading our bipartisan legislation to ensure blind or visually impaired
individuals no longer have to turn down a promotion or raise in order to avoid
losing the entirety of the benefits they rely on.

<span
style="font-size: 12pt;">Our legislation is endorsed by the National
Federation of the Blind (NFB) and you can read the bill text <a
href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QC
target="_blank" rel="noopener">HERE. </p> <p
style="text-align: center;"> </p> <p style="text-align: left;"><span
style="font-size: 12pt;">Sincerely, </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p>
<span
style="font-size: 12pt;">Kweisi Mfume
<span style="font-size:
12pt;">Member of Congress
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2263 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: 202-225-4741</td> <td style="width: 34.9496%; padding-bottom: 5px; padding-top: 5px; height: 69px;" align="center">Baltimore City Office
1010 Park Ave., Suite 105
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: 410-685-9199</td> <td style="width: 53.1173%; padding-bottom: 5px; padding-top: 5px; height: 69px;" align="center">Baltimore County Office
754 Frederick Road
Catonsville, MD 21228
Phone: 410-818-2120</td> </tr> <tr style="height: 10px;"> <td style="height: 10px; background-color: #ffffff; width: 119.136%;" colspan="3"> </td> </tr> <tr style="height: 14px;"> <td style="font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 11px; font-weight: bold; color: #717171; background-color: #e2e1df; text-align: left; padding: 5px 0px 5px 10px; width: 119.136%; height: 14px;" colspan="3"><a style="text-decoration: none; color: #717171;" href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QQQ10160131QQQ5279979QQQ7576136" | <a style="text-decoration: none; color: #717171;" href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QQQ10160131QQQ5279979QQQ7576136" | <a style="text-decoration: none; color: #717171;" href="https://iqconnect.house.gov/iqextranet/iqClickTrk.aspx?&cid=MD07KM&crop=15781QQQ10160131QQQ5279979QQQ7576136" </tr> <tr style="height: 14px;"> <td style="font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 11px; color: #717171; background-color: #ffffff; text-align: left; padding: 10px 0px 4px; width: 119.136%; height: 14px;" colspan="3"> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div></body><grammarly-desktop-integration data-grammarly-shadow-root="true"></grammarly-desktop-integration></html></body>