



## **AALJ Fully Endorses Bill that Restores Merit-Based Administrative Law Judge Appointments**

WASHINGTON — May 1, 2019 — The [Association of Administrative Law Judges \(AALJ\)](#), the professional association representing over 1,400 Social Security administrative law judges (ALJs), fully backs the “ALJ Competitive Service Restoration Act”, introduced by Rep. Elijah E. Cummings (D-Md.), the chair of the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform.

The bill has bipartisan support and is co-sponsored by Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Penn.); Rep. Richard Neal (D-Mass.); Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.); Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-Va.); Rep. Danny K. Davis (D-Ill.); Rep. Bobby Scott (D-Va.); Rep. John Larson (D-Conn.); and Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.).

The bill, upon becoming law, will override [Executive Order 13843](#), which last year ended the longtime practice of appointment of ALJs based entirely on merit and ability, after undergoing an extensive vetting process that included detailed qualification requirements, as well as a written examination, peer references and panel interviews. The executive order greatly lowered the qualifications needed for ALJs and removed the competitive hiring process. ALJs now need only be attorneys and can be appointed without competition.

ALJs are independent, impartial triers of fact in formal proceedings requiring a decision on the record. As such, it is extremely important that their selection process be free from political influence and based solely on merit. Returning ALJs to the Competitive Service, reinstituting the selection process facilitated the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and ensuring that ALJs report directly to the head of their agencies are all critical components of this bill that will ensure ALJs remain independent, impartial and free from undue influence. It is for these reasons that AALJ proudly endorses this bill.

The AALJ represents over 90% of all ALJs in the federal government. Judges who are extremely proud to serve the American public and take the responsibility of ensuring their due process rights seriously. We believe the public deserves a well-qualified, impartial administrative judiciary removed from political pressure. AALJ is grateful to Chair Cummings and the other co-sponsors of the bill for their work and pledges our continued support.

Judge Melissa McIntosh  
AALJ President

###

MEDIA CONTACT:  
Adam Shapiro  
[Adam.Shapiro@ASPR.bz](mailto:Adam.Shapiro@ASPR.bz)  
202-427-3603