



**HEARING BEFORE**

**THE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY POLICY, HEALTH CARE AND ENTITLEMENTS**

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**NOVEMBER 19, 2013**

**STATEMENT**

**OF**

**JUDGE JASPER J. BEDE**

**REGIONAL CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE  
OFFICE OF DISABILITY ADJUDICATION AND REVIEW**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Speier, and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Jasper J. Bede, and I serve as the Chief Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) for Region III (Philadelphia). I have held this position with the Social Security Administration (SSA) since April 2006. I was the Hearing Office Chief ALJ (HOCALJ) in the Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania Hearing Office from 2002 to 2006. I was appointed to the position of ALJ in 1991, after working at SSA as an Appeals Officer, Supervisory Attorney Advisor and Attorney Advisor. Prior to my employment with SSA, I was an Officer in the United States Army.

Region III includes Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The population we serve is a reflection of the wider population of the United States from farm laborers and coalminers to medical researchers and software designers. Many of the claimants who appear before our judges have unskilled work backgrounds and less than a high school education, but we also see claimants who have achieved the highest levels of education and worked in the most skilled professions.

Region III has 18 Hearing Offices, 150 ALJs, and approximately 742 support staff. Currently, Region III has 98,213 cases pending, and in fiscal year 2013, we closed 80,753 cases with an average processing time of 407 days. Region III ranks first in the nation in quality measures with an 87.7 percent Appeals Council agree rate. We also have the first and second ranked Hearing Offices in the nation (Johnstown and Seven Fields).

As the Chief ALJ in Region III, my job is to make sure our offices best serve our claimants and contribute to ODAR's mission of providing timely and quality service to the public. I frequently visit the hearing offices in my region and emphasize our goals of providing timely, policy-compliant decisions. I set up one-on-one meetings with all of the new ALJs in my region, and I make myself available to all staff. With regard to ALJs, if I learn of an issue, I work with the Hearing Office Chief ALJ to discuss the issue and to assist the ALJ. If informal discussions with the ALJ do not correct the problem, I may counsel the ALJ or issue a formal reprimand. For more serious issues, I can request that the Chief ALJ initiate proceedings with the Merit Systems Protection Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.