



News Release

SOCIAL SECURITY

Commissioner Astrue Receives 2012 President's Award from The Arc

Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, received the 2012 President's Award presented by The Arc, one of the largest charitable organizations in the United States that serves and advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The President's Award honors those whose work makes a positive impact upon The Arc, its future, and the people they serve.

"Throughout his tenure, Commissioner Astrue has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Bringing his unique business perspective to the Social Security Administration, he revolutionized the way it has been run and helped better serve individuals with the most significant disabilities," said Peter Berns, Chief Executive Officer of The Arc. "Knowing that Social Security is not just numbers and getting checks out on time, but people's lives, he has become a true ally to the disability community in our nation. We are thrilled to be honoring him at our national convention."

The Arc honored Commissioner Astrue for his steadfast commitment to people with disabilities, including people with I/DD, since the beginning of his tenure in February 2007. Under his leadership, Social Security has reduced the average length of time applicants wait to receive a decision on their claim for Social Security disability benefits. Key components to this reduction were his development and expansion of initiatives such as Compassionate Allowances and Quick Disability Determinations. This two-part, fast-track system makes disability decisions in days instead of months or years and provides benefits quickly to applicants with the most severe disabilities. In the last two years, nearly 300,000 people have been awarded disability benefits under these innovative initiatives.

Commissioner Astrue received the President's Award at The Arc's 2012 National Convention and International Forum, an event that brought members of the intellectual and developmental disability community together to advocate for human rights of people with I/DD worldwide.

For more information about the Compassionate Allowances program, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/compassionateallowances.

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