

PRESS RELEASE

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CLASS ACTION BY DISABLED EMPLOYEES AGAINST THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION WILL GO FORWARD

A group of disabled employees of the Social Security Administration has secured another victory in a class action before the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. On August 25, 2010, the EEOC Office of Federal Operations affirmed the October 8, 2008 decision of the Administrative Judge to certify the case as a class action. The action alleges that the Social Security Administration discriminates against employees with targeted disabilities by creating a glass ceiling and limiting promotions and other career advancement opportunities. The certified class includes all current and former employees with targeted disabilities at the Social Security Administration who, on or after August 22, 2003, have applied for promotions, appeared on a best qualified list and been denied promotion opportunities. The class is estimated to include approximately 2,000 members, and is represented by a consortium of law firms including Berger & Montague, P.C., Brown Goldstein & Levy LLP, Schneider Wallace Cottrell Brayton Konecky LLP, and Disability Rights Advocates.

“I am pleased with this ruling and hope it causes the Social Security Administration to confront this issue head-on,” says Ronald Jantz, a deaf SSA employee and a plaintiff in the case. “I brought this

lawsuit to bring about change necessary to ensure that employees with targeted disabilities receive the same promotions and career advancement opportunities as non-disabled employees.”

The EEOC defines “targeted disabilities” to include deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial paralysis, complete paralysis, convulsive disorders, mental retardation, mental illness, and genetic and physical conditions affecting limbs and/or spine. For years, the EEOC has reported an alarming decline in the number of people with targeted disabilities in the federal workforce, despite the government’s statutory obligation to be a model employer. The EEOC also reports that employees with targeted disabilities tend to receive fewer promotions than their peers, stagnate in grade longer than their peers, and are compensated at lower rates than their peers.

The Social Security Administration is a federal agency that provides financial benefits to more than 160 million workers and their families, and pays approximately \$580 billion annually to more than 49 million Americans. The Social Security Administration is headquartered in Baltimore, Maryland and employs approximately 62,000 employees.

Class members or others who would like more information about the case may contact one of the attorneys for the class: Shanon Carson at (215) 875-4656 or scarson@bm.net, Dan Goldstein at (410) 962-1030 or dfg@browngold.com; Larry Paradis at (510) 665-8644 or lparadis@dralegal.org; or Todd Schneider at (415) 421-7105 or tschneider@schneiderwallace.com. They may also refer to www.ssadisabilityclassaction.com. Class members who are affiliated with the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) may also contact the union's attorney, Phillip R. Kete at (202) 587-5757 or phil@ketelaborlaw.com.

Case Name: *Jantz, et al. v Astrue*
Agency No: HQ062518
Hearing No: 531-2006-00276X
Appeal No: 0720090019

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