



**ADVO GRRL MEETS WORLD
DISABILITY ADVOCACY**

To Public Officials Working with Services for People with Developmental Disabilities
From: Marilyn Martinez, Disability Advocate
Re: **The System Has to Change!**

My name is Marilyn Martinez, speaking on behalf of people with developmental disabilities. The purpose of this letter is to encourage you to do your part to change the system for people with developmental disabilities.

The system is not working for us. You need to walk in our shoes every day!

For example:

- The SSDI system says we are allowed to earn only so many credits or money is taken from our monthly SSDI checks or we have to payback an amount that the system overpaid us.
- The PASS program says we can earn a certain amount of money and put in a savings account for a specific approved item that is job-related. However, the PASS program and Social Security Administration don't communicate well with each other or even within their own offices regarding our current wage status.
- To be eligible for Social Security benefits, we can only have \$2000 total to our name in either a checking or savings account including emergency preparedness.
- If we marry someone who is also on Social Security (SSI), we lose one of our SSI benefit amounts so two people have to live on one monthly SSI check.
- If we are on SSI, we only get \$70 a month in food stamps in live on.

Now, how do you feel walking in our shoes? Let me tell you how several people with developmental disabilities feel!

- It appears to us like the system wants us to continue in the poverty level and not succeed in life!
- It feels like the system is discriminating against us! It's like the system doesn't want us to work or be employed!
- It's like the system is thinking in the 1900's (the old times) and treats us like we are vegetables and that we don't know anything!
- It appears to us like the system thinks only of its own money, pride, power and ego with no or little thought about the quality of our lives.
- It's like the system is trying to pull the wool over our eyes but we can see through it!

Enough is enough! The system has to change! We want to live full productive lives just as people without disabilities do! If you really care and want to take action to change the system, then, we encourage you to start now by picking up the phone or writing an email today! My contact information is in the bottom right corner of this letter. **The system must change and we need your help** to do it. Thanks for your consideration!

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