

MEMORANDUM

Date: January 10, 1995  
To: Senator Dole  
From: Alec Vachon *AV*  
RE: JIM SLATTERY

- \* Secretary Shalala announced yesterday that Jim Slattery will head up the Commission on Childhood Disability -- created by the Social Security Independence Act to examine operation of the children's SSI program. HHS PRESS RELEASE ATTACHED.
- \* As you may recall, you asked Secretary Shalala to appoint Dr. Wade Horn to the Commission. So far you have received no reply. The remaining Commission members will be appointed later this month.

cc: Dan  
Sheets

# HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Monday, Jan. 9, 1995

Contact: HHS Press Office  
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## CHILDHOOD DISABILITY COMMISSION NAMED

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala today announced that former U.S. Rep. Jim Slattery will chair a new Childhood Disability Commission, which will review the assistance given to disabled children under the Supplemental Security Income program.

The new commission will examine SSI policies and the needs of disabled children, and report its findings and recommendations to Congress this year. The commission was mandated in the "Social Security Independence and Program Improvements Act," passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton last year.

"Children with physical or developmental disabilities need the best and most effective response we can offer," Secretary Shalala said. "Under Jim Slattery's leadership, this commission will take a serious, objective look at our policies, to understand better where we are succeeding and where we could do a better job. We need to look at the full range of possible improvements and measure which ones could really help children with disabilities most effectively."

During his tenure in Congress, Mr. Slattery was especially interested in assistance programs for poor children and children with disabilities. "Jim Slattery brings the compassion, the realism and the experience this issue demands," Shalala said.

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In particular, the commission has authority to review eligibility criteria and the determinations process for SSI; whether federal health assistance programs should be changed to meet the needs of children with disabilities; the feasibility of providing vouchers instead of cash; whether private organizations can be more closely involved in providing services; whether benefits can be used more effectively to help children achieve futures of independence and employment; and the effects of SSI on children and their families.

Secretary Shalala urged the commission to give special consideration to the coordination of SSI with other government programs for these children.

"It is critical that the commission review the interactions of this cash assistance program with all the other medical, special education, and case management programs the government operates. We want to ensure that services are not duplicated and that our programs are as efficient and user-friendly as possible," she said.

In addition to overall policy review, the commission is empowered to look at causes for the rapid growth of the SSI children's program. Approximately 890,000 children receive these benefits today, up from some 290,000 in 1989. SSI spending on disabled children is estimated at \$5 billion in FY 1995, compared with \$1.3 billion in 1989.

Other commission members will be named later this month.

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