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Series/Staff Member: Eric Gould

Subseries:

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FolderID:

Folder Title:

Disabilities - ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] Event - SEIC [Student Earned Income
Exclusion]

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**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION****Brian D. Coyne
Chief of Staff**Cover Plus 1 PagesDATE: 7/25FROM: ☒
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FROM: ☐
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Baltimore: (410) 965-3120
Fax #: (410) 966-1463Fax Number: 456-7431**MESSAGE:**ADA Press Package looks good1 edit on page 15 of Q+ATHKS.BRIAN

A: If a person receiving SSI is under age 22, not married or head of household, and regularly attending school, SSA does not count up to \$400 of earned income per month when figuring that person's SSI payment amount. The maximum yearly exclusion is \$1,620.

Q: **When was the Student Earned Income Exclusion (SEIEC) last increased?**

A: The SEIEC has never been increased. The amounts for this exclusion have remained unchanged since the regulations to implement the SSI program were issued. The SSI program began January 1974.

Q: **How many disabled youth could be eligible for the Student Earned Income Exclusion ?**

A: There are 20,000 young people between the ages of 18-21 who currently receive SSI. Of that number 7,000-8,000 use the SEIE.

*and are classified
as students.*

Youth to Work Initiative

Q: **What is the Youth-to-Work initiative?**

A: The Youth-to-Work initiative is an interagency effort to construct and coordinate, under the leadership of the President's Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities, research, programs and services focused on supporting young people with disabilities as they transition to the workforce. The Youth-to-Work Initiative will include interagency collaboration between the Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, the Social Security Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, and other appropriate Federal agencies.

Q: **Why is the initiative important?**

A: Young people with disabilities face many barriers to employment including low educational and employment expectations, as well as low educational attainment. And, many young people do not know how to access government programs that could support their transition to work.

As of 1999, there were 416,000 youth between the ages of 18 and 24 on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). Less than one percent of this population currently leaves these programs to join the workforce.

With the labor market demanding higher levels of education and skills, the completion of high school and further education is critical. Improving the postschool, transition, and independent living results of young people with disabilities will result in an increase in their employment opportunities.

**SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION****Brian D. Coyne****Chief of Staff**Cover Plus 1 PagesDATE: 7/24

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Fax Number: 454-7431**MESSAGE:**RE: SGA(2/99 Robert Pear Story)

THE NEW YORK TIMES NATIONAL FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1999

YN2 A15

Clinton to Propose More Generous Policy for the Disabled

By ROBERT PEAR

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11 — The Clinton Administration will propose a more generous policy on Friday regarding the payment of cash benefits to disabled people under Social Security, Administration officials said today.

For the first time in nearly a decade, the Government will propose an increase in the amount of money that people may earn while receiving disability benefits.

The limit on earnings is now \$500 a month, and it has been at that level since January 1990. The Commissioner of Social Security, Kenneth S. Apfel, will issue a proposed rule increasing the limit to \$700, officials said. After reviewing public comments, the Commissioner has the authority to make the change, which would take effect on June 1.

Vice President Al Gore plans to announce the proposal on a visit to Albany on Friday.

"By proposing an increase in the allowable monthly earnings from \$500 to \$700 a month — a 40 percent increase — we are enabling Americans with disabilities to make the most of their abilities," Mr. Gore said in the text of his prepared remarks.

Social Security officials said the change could help 250,000 people a year. Those who receive disability benefits are automatically eligible

for Medicare after a two-year waiting period, and for many, the Medicare coverage is even more valuable than the cash benefits.

Among those who sought the change is Tipper Gore, the Vice President's wife. Since the early 1980's, she has been a zealous advocate for people with mental illness

An attempt to help more disabled people become self-sufficient.

and retardation.

Martha E. Ford, a lobbyist for the Arc, formerly known as the Association for Retarded Citizens, welcomed the proposed change.

"This is an important step, long awaited, and it will help a lot of people," Ms. Ford said. "It will make a significant difference for lower-income workers who are severely disabled and need continued support."

Ms. Ford said the change would benefit many people with disabilities who work at food service jobs or at

entry-level positions in supermarkets and retail stores. Disabled workers earning \$500 to \$700 a month are now ineligible for benefits, but could qualify under the new policy.

The Administration plans to make a similar change in a related program, Supplemental Security Income. The White House said the changes, taken together, would cost the Government \$1.2 billion over five years. Social Security benefits for disabled workers now average \$733 a month.

Administration officials did not suggest any specific way to pay for the added benefits but said the cost would somehow be covered in the overall context of a balanced budget.

With unemployment now at 4.3 percent, the lowest level in 28 years, many employers have difficulty finding workers, and some say they are more willing to hire people with disabilities. Because of recent increases in the minimum wage, now \$5.15 an hour, workers with disabilities are more likely to reach the earnings limit of \$500 a month.

While people with disabilities have not generally been viewed as a big voting bloc, disability rights have won bipartisan support. President Clinton recently proposed a new tax credit and new health insurance options to help people with disabilities go back to work.

Two Republican Senators, William

V. Roth Jr. of Delaware and James M. Jeffords of Vermont, have joined Mr. Clinton in supporting a bill that would expand Medicaid and Medicare so disabled people could retain their health benefits when they return to work. Former Senator Bob Dole, himself a disabled war veteran, urged Congress last week to pass the bill as a way to increase the number of disabled people who work and pay taxes.

Under Federal law, a person is said to be disabled if he or she is unable to engage in "substantial gainful activity" because of a physical or mental impairment that is expected to cause death or to last 12 months or more.

Under the current rules, if a person is earning more than \$500 a month (after subtracting certain work expenses), he is considered to be engaging in substantial gainful activity and therefore not disabled.

The ultimate objective of the new policy is to help disabled people get jobs and become self-sufficient.

"If even a small fraction of the people receiving disability benefits could go to work," Mr. Gore said, "we would save billions of dollars in the long run."