

December 30, 2016

MaryGail K. Douglas  
S.C. State Representative  
District 41  
314B Blatt Bldg.  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Ms. Douglas,

My name is Brenda Price, the maternal aunt of Bernice Coleman Davis whose Social Security Disability claim was denied November 15, 2015 and forwarded to the Judge to schedule an appointment for a court hearing which is still pending. I am writing on behalf of my niece who was diagnosed with Bipolar/Paranoia and Anxiety at the age of 26. Bernice lives in Chester, South Carolina. We are seeking immediate attention and assistance with this matter from your office.

The Social Security Office where the Judge's Chambers is located in Charlotte, N C directed Bernice to file a Dire Need Request indicating she had Stage Two Breast Cancer requesting immediate attention for review which is still pending. The lawyer told Bernice the only two instances to qualify for immediate action included Stage Four Cancer and if the house was in foreclosure.

Bernice is 58 years old and continues to suffer with Bipolar/Paranoia and Anxiety. Her medical history includes a total of two years of confinement in the St. Elizabeth Hospital in Washington, DC beginning 1983 to 1987. She managed to work and raise her daughter who is twenty-five years old and living in Petersburg, VA pursuing her Master's Degree in Psychology.

Bernice's last job was with Chester High School in Chester, SC as a Library Assistant. Prior service included substitute teaching in the Chester County School District. She resigned abruptly from her job in 2015 with fourteen years of service. She became highly frustrated and withdrawn. She blamed her psychiatrist and the school system for failing her and not acting on her request for Family Medical Leave that she requested prior to resigning. She desperately needed time to clear her head.

After resigning from her job she became extremely frustrated and entered into a deep depression. There were some days she did not do anything. Her husband assumed the responsibility of supporting Bernice until he passed April 14, 2016 (he paid her rent \$425.00, two charge accounts \$25.00 each and toiletries \$75.00). Additionally, her two maternal aunts sent a combined total of \$200.00 monthly to cover her utilities and car insurance. Bernice was not in a position mentally to complete the paperwork to apply for eligible survivor's benefits from her husband's death. I made several visits from Charlotte, North Carolina to Chester, South Carolina to complete the paperwork for her.

In August 2016 she was diagnosed with stage two breast cancer and had surgery November 4, 2016. Her oldest sister helps her tremendously (she had stage 4 cancer in 2015; breast, lung,

bone and brain). Bernice's oldest sister, along with me and other maternal aunts have accompanied her to appointments as well as helping her cope with her medical and other challenges. She started radiation Tuesday, December 27, 2016 which is scheduled for four weeks, five days each week in Rock Hill, South Carolina.

She did receive a settlement in October 2016 from the South Carolina school system for accumulated leave in the sick leave bank and long term disability totaling approximately \$10,200.

The only income Bernice has is \$133 monthly from her deceased husband's pension from a previous job in Washington, DC. She desperately needs income to survive and cover her expenses. She had worked and qualifies for Social Security Disability because of her current medical challenges and deep stages of depression. Her patience is short; she becomes paranoid and frequently finds it difficult to concentrate especially when completing a project and listening.

She is not able to work. I have been there with her and made several observations. Bernice becomes impatient and readily gives up when confronted with any situation.

Examples:

1. Bernice is under the care of psychiatrists with prescribed medications Haloperidol (helps balance mood) – side effects weight gain, hinders thinking, does not respond well to situations, crying, fast movement, becomes loud, paranoia is very strong. Pristiq (helps balance mood) – anti-depressant. Prazodone – sleeping pill – helps her sleep. She cannot sleep without sleeping pills. However, she will on some occasions skip dosages and attempt to regulate her own medicine. The side effects are sleeping on the floor in front of the opened door to her apartment, not eating properly; she experiences episodes of low self-esteem prompting her to call me in the early morning hours with extremely long, vague conversations explaining how and why she has disassembled appliances, why she did not take her medicine and her future plans.
2. Telephone Calls – On January 23 2015 after her resignation from the school system she called me and said “I am lost in my head, I am in la la land, being in the house with the door unlocked, I am worried that I am not worried about it. Pat and Linda are in la la land. I know Teresa is in la la land too.” Then she abruptly ended the conversation and hung up. On January 29, 2015 Bernice called me and said “We have done as much as we can. We have to go outside the family now. We can call James for advice.” (Special Note: Pat, Linda and Teresa are her sisters. James is her maternal Uncle.
3. Visits to the doctors – She did not want to listen and felt they were talking down to her. I was there and observed that the doctors were very polite and patient with her.
4. The Catawba Mental Health in South Carolina – Bernice became boisterous with accusations directed to the doctor that she did not know what she was doing. I was there

with her and she told me that she was being nice to the doctor that day. Bernice did perform unprofessionally.

5. The bank statements had to be reviewed to determine the amount of available funds in her deceased husband's bank account. Bernice could not do it; she instantly gave up. I reviewed the bank statements.
6. Pending Medicaid Approval – It was very frustrating to her; she had said she could set-up a payment plan even though she did not have sufficient income (\$130 monthly); it was taking too long to approve the Medicaid which prolonged her surgery. I assisted her with the paperwork and reminded her to contact the Medicaid Office for status updates.
7. Board of South Carolina Education – Bernice felt abandoned when she contacted the officials at the Board of Education to rescind her resignation papers and inquire about the status of her Family Medical Leave. They reiterated that she had quit and was no longer an employee. If they had known that she was mentally ill she would not have been hired for the safety of the students. Miss Shawn Williams, Director, Human Resources, Chester County School District told her it was not documented that she was mentally ill. Miss Maggie James, a worker in the Chester County School Board told Bernice that her family has a history of mental illness. Bernice was devastated after hearing those statements. I was there with her and was amazed with the response of the professionals.

I am asking that your office contact the appropriate office with the Social Security Administration to expedite the final review of Bernice's medical records and the documentation submitted to the Social Security Office and make a final decision to qualify her for Social Security Disability as soon as possible.

Finally, Bernice's stress level has increased waiting on the final decision to qualify her for eligible benefits that she has worked for to start receiving her monthly Social Security Disability checks to allow her to live a quality life, one that allows her to take care of her basic needs for shelter, clothing and food. (She does receive food stamps). It leaves her scared, confused and frustrated.

Thank you for all assistance that you can provide in this urgent request.

Sincerely,

***Brenda Price***

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CC:

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S.C. State Senator District 17

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The Honorable Nikki R. Haley  
Office of the Governor

J. Michael Mulvaney  
USA Representative

Lindsey Graham, Jr.  
USA Senator

Timothy Scott  
USA Senator

The Honorable Barak Obama  
President, USA

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