The SSI is a program available to aged, blind, and disabled people with low income, including children.

In United States of America v. Jose Luis Vaello Madero (Case No. 17–2133 (GAG)), the Federal Government commenced an action against Mr. Vaello to collect $28,000 in overpaid SSI benefits after he moved from New York to Loíza. These monthly disability benefits were deposited directly into his New York bank account. The basis for said complaint was that the SSI program is not available to territories. Hence, the Government argued that Vaello had forfeited his right to receive SSI disability benefits after he moved to Puerto Rico and that he was liable for any overpayments.

Mr. Vaello, represented by a Court-appointed pro bono counsel, challenged the criminal statute used by the plaintiff as a basis for the civil action and attacked the constitutionality of denying SSI benefits to residents of Puerto Rico.

We agree with the Honorable Judge, Gustavo Gelpí, and the Honorable Resident Commissioner, Jenniffer González, that excluding Puerto Rico from the SSI program is a violation of the equal protection guarantees of the Due Process Clause. In dismissing the complaint filed by the plaintiff, Judge Gelpí cited the per curiam Supreme Court decision in Califano v. Torres, 435 U.S. 1–1978, and subsequently, in Harris v. Rosario, 446 U.S. 651–1980, as the basis that allows the Federal Government to discriminate against the residents of Puerto Rico in what pertains to federal programs, such as the SSI. He affirmed that the U.S. Congress does not have carte blanche to discriminate against territories at its convenience.

''Congress [. . .] cannot demean and brand said United States citizen while in Puerto Rico with a stigma of inferior citizenship to that of his brethren nationwide,'' Gelpí stated in his opinion. (https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/tribunales/nota/juezdesestimademandadelgobiernofederalcontraun residentedelaisla-2474754/)

On February 4, the Honorable Jenniffer González-Colón, Resident Commissioner, introduced into Congress H.R. 947—Supplemental Security Income Equality Act, which seeks to extend the SSI program to the U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico. This bill was introduced also by Congress members of Puerto Rican descent, namely, José Serrano, Darren Soto, and Nydia Velázquez, as well as the delegates of the Virgin Islands, the American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Guam. The Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico supports this bipartisan effort in the U.S. Congress and, therefore, requests Congress to pass said bill, or a similar version that guarantees the same rights to all U.S. citizens during this session.

We most certainly believe that the constitutional rights of equal protection and due process of law must apply to U.S. citizens residing in Puerto Rico. For all of the foregoing, it is our duty to request the Congress, through this Concurrent Resolution, to pass legislation and recognize the claim for social justice and equal treatment before the law of the over three million Puerto Ricans who are U.S. citizens.

Be it resolved by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico:

Section 1.—To request the Congress of the United States of America to pass legislation that provides for equal treatment for the United States citizens residing in Puerto Rico regarding the right to receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI); and for other related purposes.

Section 2.—It is hereby ordered that a copy of this Concurrent Resolution translated into English be delivered to the leadership of the Congress of the United States of America.

Section 3.—This Concurrent Resolution shall take effect upon its approval.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 375. A bill to improve efforts to identify and reduce Governmentwide improper payments, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–35).

By Mr. BARRASSO, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

Report to accompany S. 1061, a bill to amend the John F. Kennedy Center Act to authorize appropriations for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–36).

By Mr. HOEVEN, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 210. A bill to amend the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 and the Indian Law Enforcement Reform Act to provide for advancements in public safety services to Indian communities, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116–37).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Ms. ERNST):

S. 1320. A bill to reauthorize and improve the Department of Defense Mentor-Protege Program; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 1321. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit interference with voting systems under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 1322. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to give preferential consideration to individuals who have successfully completed air traffic controller training and veterans when hiring air traffic control specialists, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science , and Transportation.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1323. A bill to amend title XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to collect information under Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program related to social determinants of health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1324. A bill to strengthen Buy American requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 1325. A bill to provide that the President must seek congressional approval before engaging members of the United States Armed Forces in military humanitarian operations; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Ms. BALDWIN):

S. 1326. A bill to amend the Animal Health Protection Act to establish a grant program for research on chronic wasting disease, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. CRAMER):

S. 1327. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the credit for production of refined coal; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 1328. A bill to designate foreign persons who improperly interfere in United States elections as inadmissible aliens, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. UDALL, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Ms. SMITH):

S. 1329. A bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to require that equitable distribution of assistance include equitable distribution in Indian tribes and tribal organizations and to increase amounts reserved for allotment to Indian tribes and tribal organizations under certain circumstances, and to provide for a Government Accountability Office report on child abuse and neglect in American Indian tribal communities; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH:

S. 1330. A bill to amend the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 to clarify whistleblower rights and protections, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CRAMER, and Ms. ERNST):

S. 1331. A bill to provide additional protections for our veterans; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 1332. A bill to set forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2020 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2021 through 2029; read the first time.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. PETERS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. KING, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1333. A bill to amend the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, including making changes to the Do Not Pay Initiative, for improved detection, prevention, and recovery of improper payments to deceased individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 1334. A bill authorizing a program to promote innovative approaches to securing prompt access to appropriate care for individuals presenting at emergency departments with acute mental health illness; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SASSE, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. BLACKBURN, and Mr. PAUL):

S. 1335. A bill to eliminate the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WYDEN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. SANDERS, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. Res. 190. A resolution promoting minority health awareness and supporting the goals and ideals of National Minority Health Month in April 2019, which include bringing attention to the health disparities faced by minority populations of the United States such as American Indians, Alaska Natives, Asian Americans, African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. PERDUE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. YOUNG, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. REED, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DAINES, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. HAWLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. KING, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. LANKFORD, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. ENZI, Mr. TILLIS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Ms. ERNST, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. COTTON, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ROMNEY, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. MENENDEZ)):

S. Res. 191. A resolution supporting the designation of the week of May 5 through May 11, 2019, as ''National Small Business Week'' and commending the entrepreneurial spirit of small business owners in the United States and the impact that small business owners have on their communities; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 91

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 91, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize per diem payments under comprehensive service programs for homeless veterans to furnish care to dependents of homeless veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 151

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 151, a bill to deter criminal robocall violations and improve enforcement of section 227(b) of the Communications Act of 1934, and for other purposes.

S. 164

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 164, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to remove the prohibition on eligibility for TRICARE Reserve Select of members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who are eligible to enroll in a health benefits plan under chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code.

S. 427

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 427, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to enhance activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to research on autism spectrum disorder and enhance programs relating to autism, and for other purposes.

S. 436

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 436, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require the development of public transportation operations safety risk reduction programs, and for other purposes.

S. 457

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 457, a bill to require that $1 coins issued during 2019 honor President George H.W. Bush and to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to issue bullion coins during 2019 in honor of Barbara Bush.

S. 506

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 506, a bill to support State, Tribal, and local efforts to remove access to firearms from individuals who are a danger to themselves or others pursuant to court orders for this purpose.

S. 510

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 510, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for certain requirements relating to charges for internet, television, and voice services, and for other purposes.

S. 518

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 518, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 622

At the request of Mr. JONES, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 622, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 659

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 659, a bill to provide for certain additional requirements with respect to patent disclosures.

S. 680

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 680, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care.

S. 684

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 684, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 696

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 696, a bill to designate the same individual serving as the Chief Nurse Officer of the Public Health Service as the National Nurse for Public Health.

S. 741

At the request of Ms. SMITH, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 741, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to require group and individual health insurance coverage and group health plans to provide for cost sharing for oral anticancer drugs on terms no less favorable than the cost sharing provided for anticancer medications administered by a health care provider.

S. 756

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 756, a bill to modify the prohibition on recognition by United States courts of certain rights relating to certain marks, trade names, or commercial names.

S. 775

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 775, a bill to amend the America COMPETES Act to require certain agencies to develop scientific integrity policies, and for other purposes.