



**Congressional Research Service**

Assisting the Congress with its deliberations and legislative decisions

# **Social Security Disability Programs: SSDI and SSI**

*Overview and Current Issues*

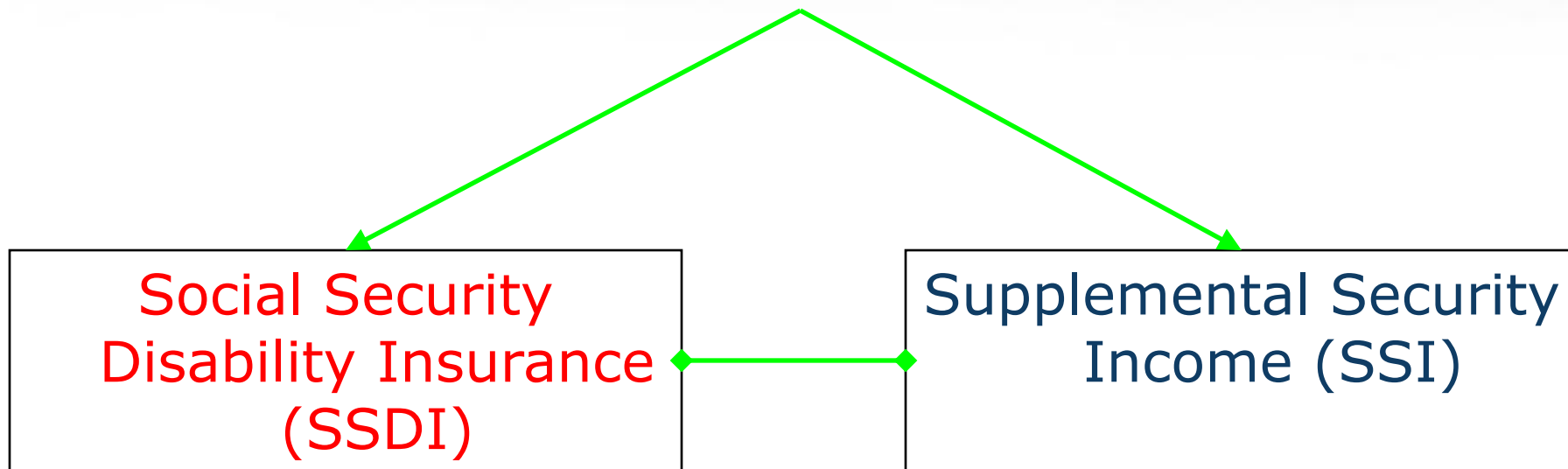
Scott Szymendera

Congressional Research Service

**July 11, 2012**

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# SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY



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## SSDI

Insured

Working Age and  
Dependents

Medicare

DI Trust Fund

## SSI

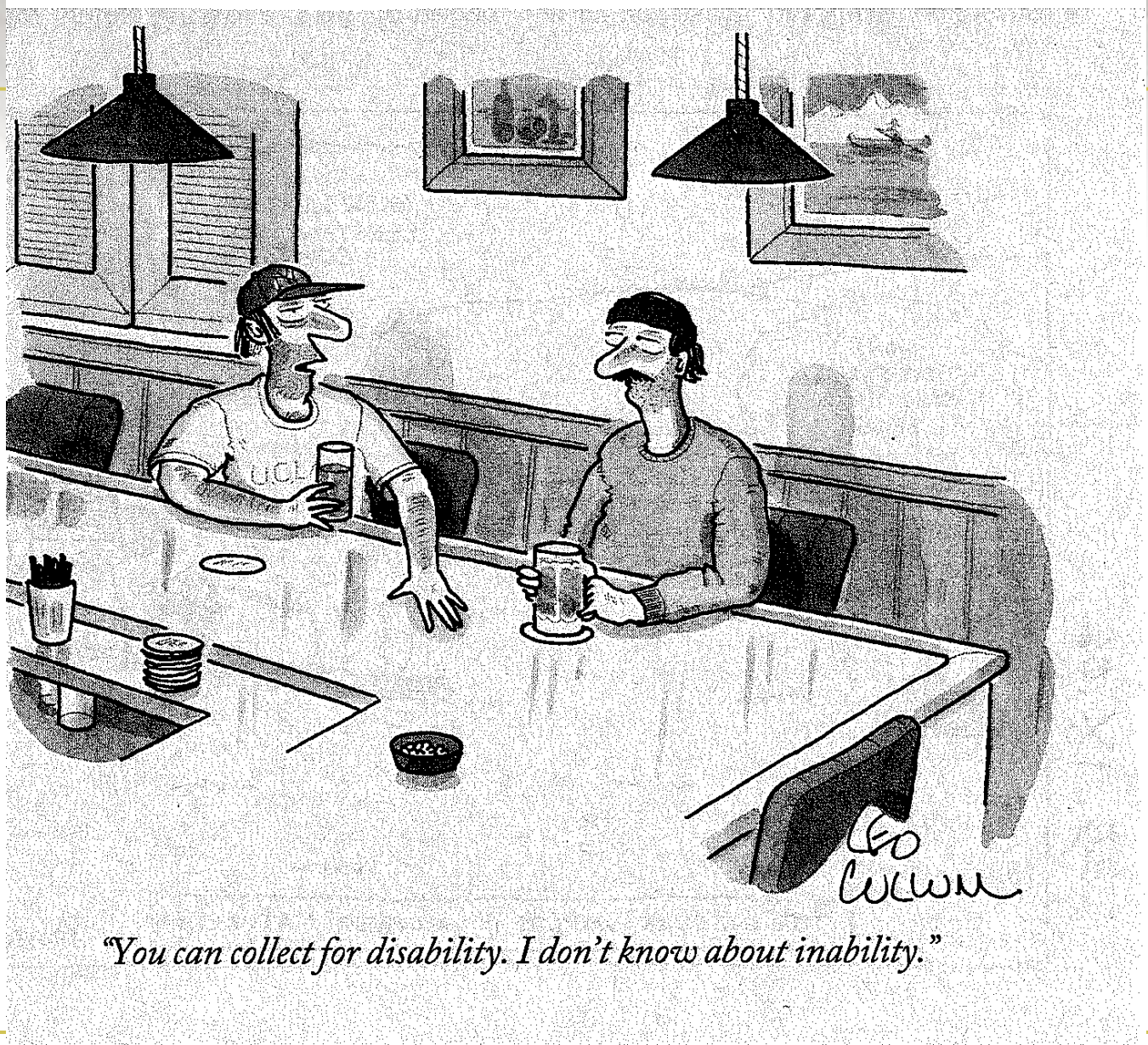
Means-Tested

Individual Children,  
Adults, Seniors

Medicaid

General Revenue





*"You can collect for disability. I don't know about inability."*



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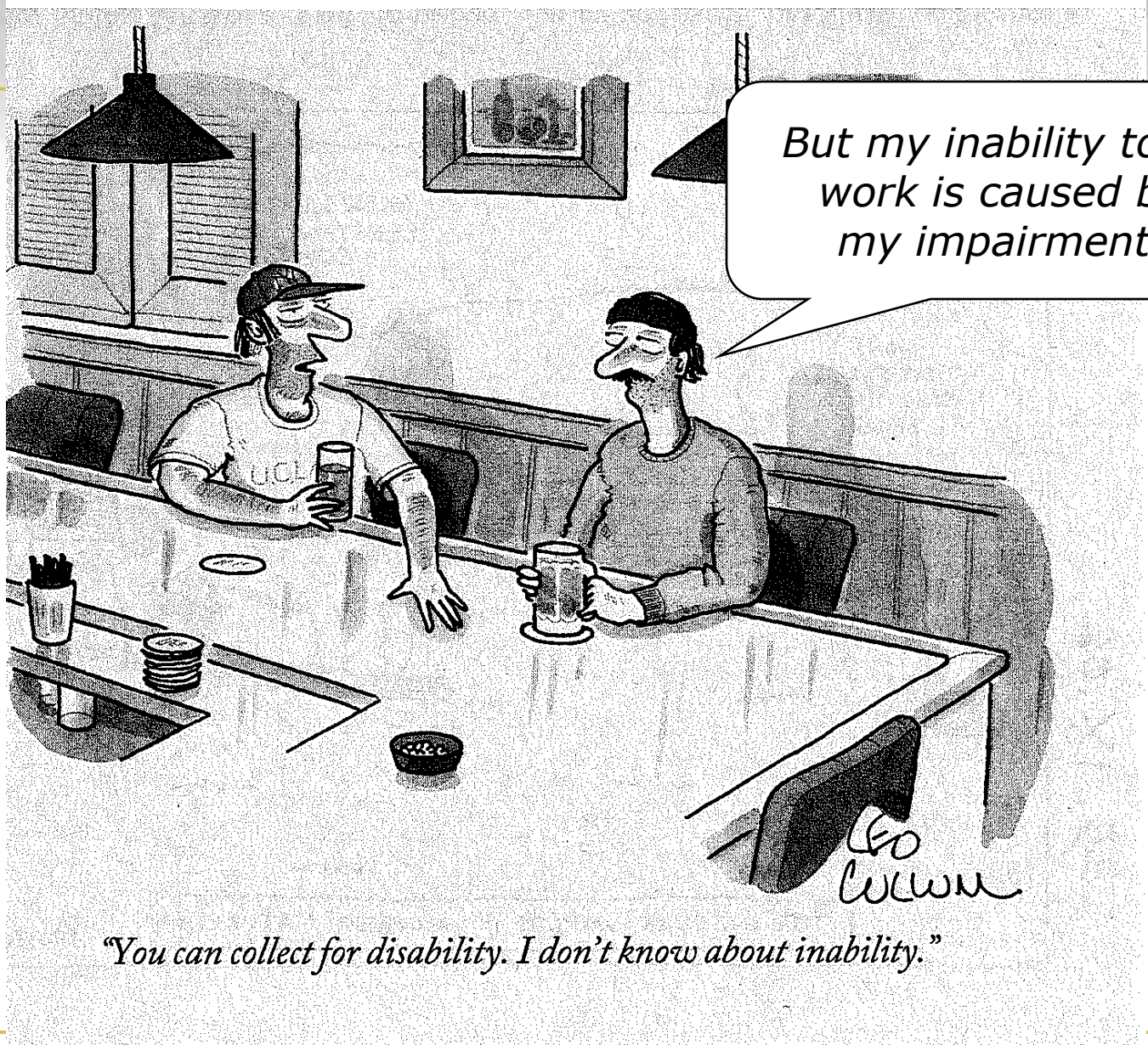
# Definition of Disability

Impairment

**CAUSES**

Inability to work





*But my inability to work is caused by my impairment!*

*"You can collect for disability. I don't know about inability."*



# Primary Impairments – 2010 Awards

## SSDI Workers

**Musculoskeletal**  
**33%**

**Mental Disorders**  
**21%**

**Circulatory Sys.**  
**10%**

**All Others**  
**36%**

## SSI Adults

**Mental Disorders**  
**41%**

**Musculoskeletal**  
**23%**

**Circulatory Sys.**  
**9%**

**All Others**  
**27%**

## SSI Children

**Mental Disorders**  
**68%**

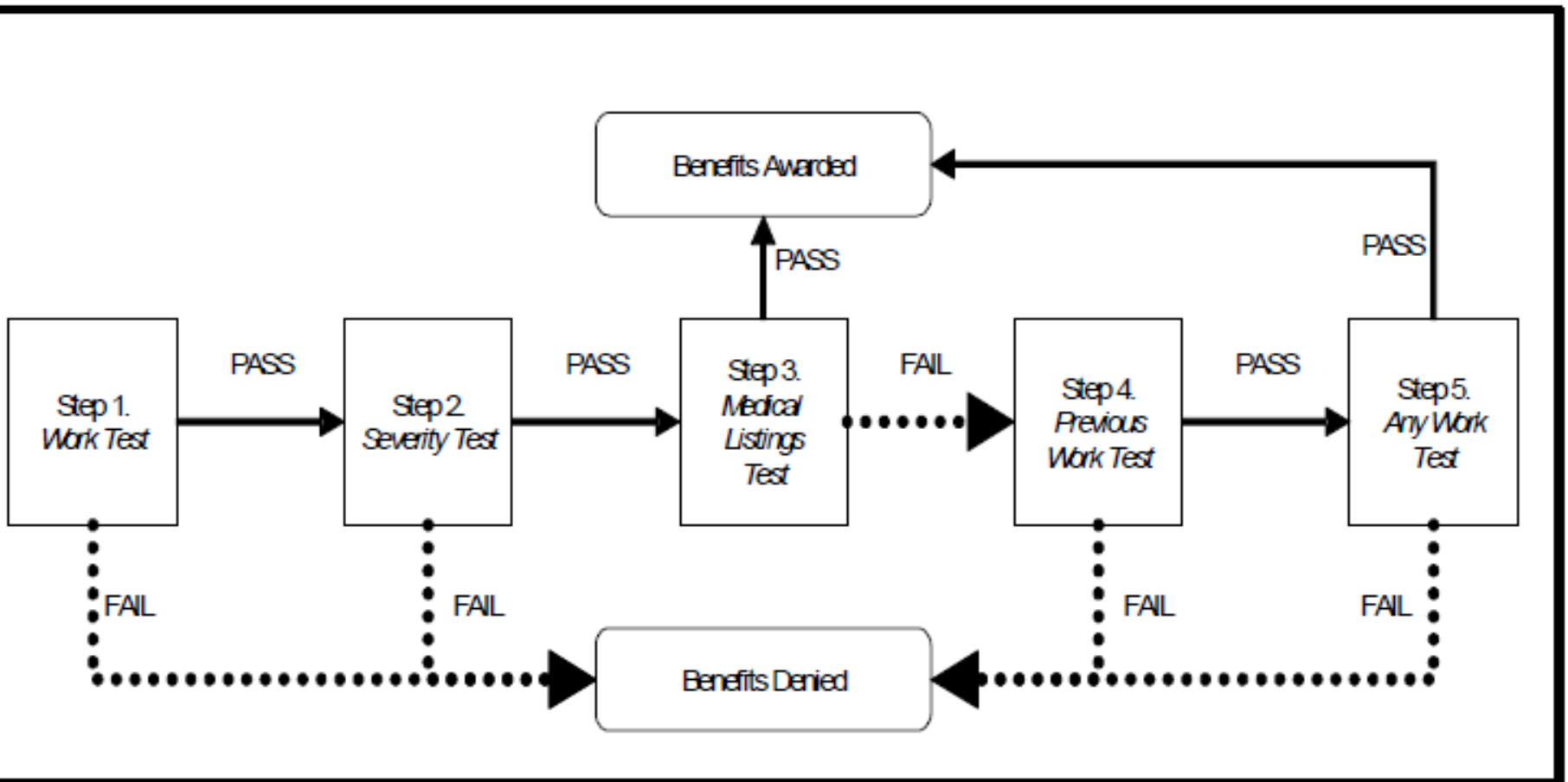
**Musculoskeletal**  
**<1%**

**Circulatory Sys.**  
**<1%**

**All Others**  
**31%**



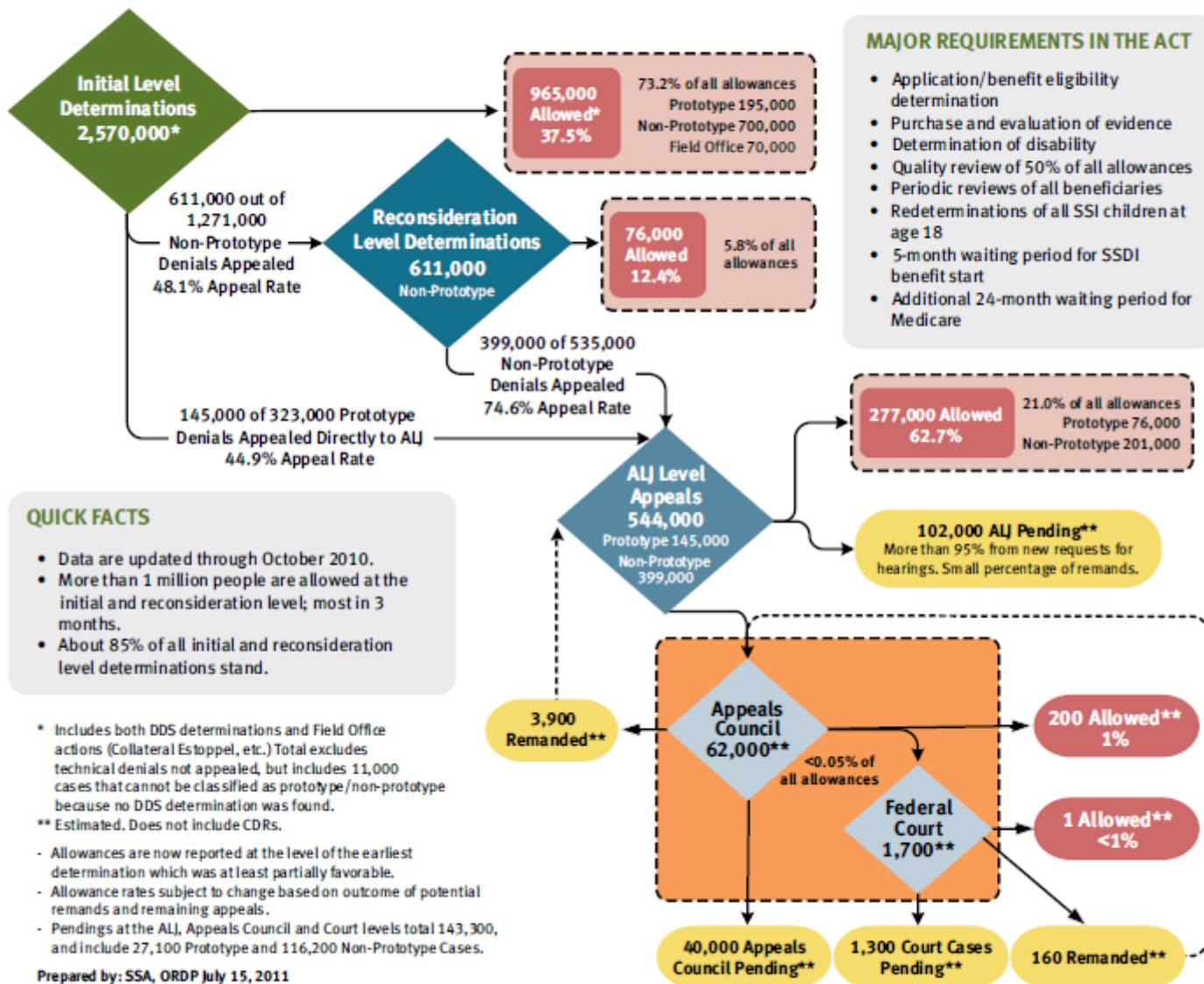
# Evaluation of Disability





# Determination and Appeals Process

2008 Longitudinal Disability Claims and Appeals Data  
Based on claims filed in Calendar Year 2008



### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS IN THE ACT

- Application/benefit eligibility determination
- Purchase and evaluation of evidence
- Determination of disability
- Quality review of 50% of all allowances
- Periodic reviews of all beneficiaries
- Redeterminations of all SSI children at age 18
- 5-month waiting period for SSDI benefit start
- Additional 24-month waiting period for Medicare

### QUICK FACTS

- Data are updated through October 2010.
- More than 1 million people are allowed at the initial and reconsideration level; most in 3 months.
- About 85% of all initial and reconsideration level determinations stand.

\* Includes both DDS determinations and Field Office actions (Collateral Estoppel, etc.) Total excludes technical denials not appealed, but includes 11,000 cases that cannot be classified as prototype/non-prototype because no DDS determination was found.

\*\* Estimated. Does not include CDRs.

- Allowances are now reported at the level of the earliest determination which was at least partially favorable.
- Allowance rates subject to change based on outcome of potential remands and remaining appeals.
- Pendlings at the ALJ, Appeals Council and Court levels total 143,300, and include 27,100 Prototype and 116,200 Non-Prototype Cases.

Prepared by: SSA, ORDP July 15, 2011  
Source: Longitudinal Disability Research File



# Benefit Formulas

**Average Monthly  
Benefit:**

**May 2012**

**SSDI**

Based on covered earnings  
No reduction for income  
Cash cliff

**\$1,111.17**  
(Disabled Workers)

**SSI**

Federal Benefit Rate +  
State Supplement -  
Countable Income

**\$516.00**  
(Federally Administered)



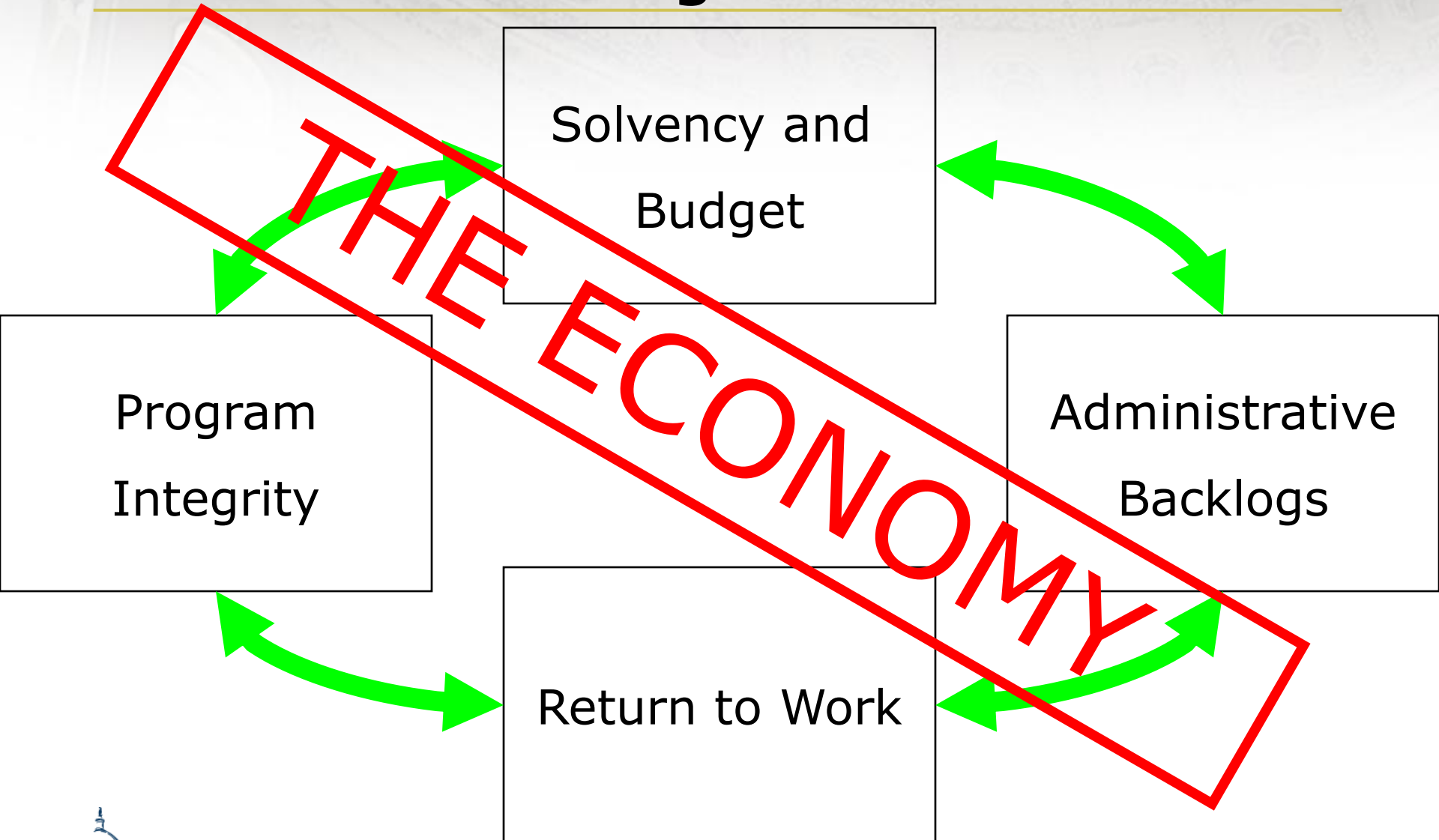
# Program Data: May 2012

Program		Beneficiaries (thousands)	Total Monthly Payments (millions of \$)	Average Monthly Payment (\$)
SSDI		10,805	10,364	959.19
	Disabled Workers	8,707	9,675	1,111.17
	Spouses	165	49	298.11
	Children	1,933	640	330.97
SSI		8,179	4,504	516.00
	Under 18	1,298	836	615.90
	18-64	4,820	2,811	532.60
	65 and older	2,061	857	414.70

Source: SSA; Monthly Statistical Snapshot, May 2012.



# Issues Facing the SSDI and SSI Programs



# For additional information

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