

## President Obama Appoints Three New Members and One Returning Member to the National Council on Disability

WASHINGTON, D.C. – April 4 – The National Council on Disability (NCD) – an independent federal agency that recommends disability policy to the Administration, Congress and other federal agencies – welcomed President Barack Obama’s announcement on April 3 that he intends to appoint three new members to the agency. In addition, Councilmember Janice Lehrer-Stein was reappointed for a second term. New members are expected to begin work with NCD immediately upon completion and receipt of all necessary documents.

NCD’s new members Benro T. Ogunyipe, Dr. Katherine D. Seelman and Royal P. Walker, Jr. will join Janice Lehrer-Stein who is returning to the Council, NCD Chairperson Jeff Rosen, and Council members Clyde Terry, Gary Blumenthal, Chester Finn, Sara Gelser, Ari Ne’eman, Kamilah Oni Martin-Proctor, Stephanie Orlando, Captain Jonathan F. Kuniholm, USMC (Retired), Lynnae M. Ruttledge and Alice Wong all previously appointed by the President, to round out NCD’s roster. Biographies for the new Council members are at the end of this release.

"The Council extends a warm welcome to our outstanding incoming members and to Janice Lehrer-Stein who returns for a second term," proclaimed NCD Chairperson Jeff Rosen. "The depth and breadth of experience and knowledge they will bring to the Council’s existing work will prove invaluable in our collective quest to ensure the human, civil, and legal rights of Americans with disabilities across the nation."

NCD also expresses its collective gratitude to the outgoing members Pamela Young-Holmes, Matan Koch and Dr. Fernando M. Torres-Gil for their terrific work on behalf of Americans with disabilities and for their commitment to public service.

### Biographies of New National Council on Disability Members:

#### Janice Lehrer-Stein, Appointee for Member, National Council on Disability

Janice Lehrer-Stein is a former labor and employment discrimination litigator in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco, California. She was first appointed to the National Council on Disability in 2011, and serves as its Vice Chairperson. She was first appointed to the National Council on Disability in 2011, and serves as its Chairperson of Access and Integration. She served as its Vice Chairperson from 2011 to 2013. She is a National Trustee of the Foundation Fighting Blindness. Ms. Lehrer-Stein is a member of the California and New York Advisory Boards of Disability Rights Advocates, a non-profit law firm that seeks to improve access and secure the civil rights of individuals with disabilities. She is a former member of the board of Medical Research Charities. Ms. Lehrer-Stein, who is legally blind, received a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from the University of Toronto.

#### Benro T. Ogunyipe, Appointee for Member, National Council on Disability

Benro T. Ogunyipe is an Accessibility Specialist for the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), a position he has held since 2004. He also serves in various roles at the DHS Bureau of Accessibility and Job Accommodation in

Chicago, including Bureau Legislative Liaison and Communications Access Trainer. He is a member of Chicagoland Black Deaf Advocates, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Illinois Association of the Deaf. He served as President of National Black Deaf Advocates, Inc. from 2011 to 2013, and served as Vice President and Chairman of the Board from 2007 to 2011. He was a Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Illinois Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission from 2007 to 2012. Mr. Ogunyipe received a B.A. from Gallaudet University and an M.P.A. from the School of Public Service at DePaul University.

Dr. Katherine D. Seelman, Appointee for Member, National Council on Disability

Dr. Katherine D. Seelman is Associate Dean and Professor of Rehabilitation Sciences and Technology at the University of Pittsburgh, a position she has held since 2001. From 2006 to 2013 she served as Co-Research Director of the National Science Foundation Quality of Life Technology Engineering Center, before becoming Senior Policy Advisor in 2013. Dr. Seelman was Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research at the U.S. Department of Education from 1994 to 2001. She was Director of Program Development for the Administration of Developmental Disabilities at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services from 1993 to 1994, and previously, she was a Research Specialist at the National Council on Disability from 1989 to 1993. Dr. Seelman was one of two members from the U.S. to serve on the World Health Organization/World Bank's international committee guiding the development of the first World Report on Disability. She presented a section of the report for which she was principle author at its launch in 2011 at the United Nations. She serves on the Advisory Board at George Mason University's Center for the Study of Chronic Illness and Disability, and a member of the Society for Disability Studies and the American Public Health Association. Dr. Seelman received a B.A. from Hunter College and an M.A. and Ph.D. from New York University.

Royal P. Walker, Jr., Appointee for Member, National Council on Disability

Royal P. Walker, Jr. is currently Executive Director of the Institute for Disability Studies at The University of Southern Mississippi, a position he has held since 2008. He first joined the Institute for Disability Studies as Associate Director and Instructor in 1992. Additionally, Mr. Walker is a consultant at Royal Walker, Jr., J.D. & Associates, Inc., a strategic planning and training firm he founded in 1992. He was Executive Director of the Gaming Commission of the Mississippi State Tax Commission from 1991 to 1992, and Director of the Division of Budget and Policy Development at the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration from 1990 to 1991. Mr. Walker is a past president of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities. He has served on the board of directors of the American Task Force for the Homeless, the Governor's Interagency Coordinating Council for Children with Special Needs, the Mississippi Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Mississippi March of Dimes. Mr. Walker received a B.A. from Jackson State University and a J.D. from Texas Southern University.

About the National Council on Disability (NCD): NCD is an independent federal agency of 15 Presidentially-appointed Council Members and full-time professional staff, who advise the President, Congress and other federal agencies on disability policy, programs, and practices. Members are appointed by the

President, from diverse backgrounds across the nation, and the disability spectrum.

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