

II. The information collection(s) listed below have been submitted to OMB:

1. *Disability Report—0960-0573*. The information collected on Form SSA-3368-F6 is needed for the determination of disability by the State DDSs. The information will be used to develop medical evidence and to assess the alleged disability. The respondents are applicants for disability benefits.

*Number of Respondents:* 2,438,496.

*Frequency of Response:* 1.

*Average Burden Per Response:* 45 minutes.

*Estimated annual Burden:* 1,828,872 hours.

2. *Work History Report—0960-0572*. The information collected on Form SSA-3369-F6 is needed for the determination of disability by the State DDSs. The information will be used to document an individual's past work history. The respondents are applicants for OASDI and SSI benefits.

*Number of Respondents:* 1,000,000.

*Frequency of Response:* 1.

*Average Burden Per Response:* 30 minutes.

*Estimated annual Burden:* 500,000 hours.

3. *Medical History and Disability Report, Disabled Child—0960-0574*. The information collected on Form SSA-3820-F4 is needed for the determination of disability by the State DDSs to obtain various types of information about a child's condition, his/her treating sources and/or other medical sources of evidence. The respondents are SSI claimants who are applying for disabled child's benefits.

*Number of Respondents:* 523,000.

*Frequency of Response:* 1.

*Average Burden Per Response:* 20 minutes.

*Estimated annual Burden:* 174,333 hours.

Written comments and recommendations regarding the information collection(s) should be directed within 30 days to the OMB Desk Officer and SSA Reports Clearance Officer at the following addresses:

(OMB) Office of Management and Budget, OIRA, Attn: Laura Oliven, New Executive Office Building, Room 10230, 725 17th St., NW., Washington, DC 20503

(SSA) Social Security Administration, DCFAM, Attn: Nicholas E. Tagliareni, 1-A-21 Operations Bldg., 6401 Security Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21235

To receive a copy of any of the forms or clearance packages, call the SSA Reports Clearance Officer on (410) 965-4125 or write to him at the address listed above.

Dated: October 24, 1997.

**Nicholas E. Tagliareni,**

*Reports Clearance Officer, Social Security Administration.*

[FR Doc. 97-28831 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4190-29-M

## SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

### Finding Regarding the Social Insurance System of The Czech Republic

**AGENCY:** Social Security Administration.

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding Regarding the Social Insurance System of The Czech Republic.

**FINDING:** Section 202(t)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(t)(1)) prohibits payment of monthly benefits to any individual who is not a United States citizen or national for any month after he or she has been outside the United States for 6 consecutive months, and prior to the first month thereafter for all of which, the individual has been in the United States. This prohibition does not apply to such an individual where one of the exceptions described in sections 202(t)(2) through 202(t)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(t)(2)-(5)) affects his or her case.

Section 202(t)(2) of the Social Security Act provides that, subject to certain residency requirements of section 202(t)(11), the prohibition against payment shall not apply to any individual who is a citizen of a country which the Commissioner of Social Security finds has in effect a social insurance system which is of general application in such country and which:

- (a) pays periodic benefits, or the actuarial equivalent thereof, on account of old age, retirement, or death; and
- (b) permits individuals who are United States citizens but not citizens of that country and who qualify for such benefits to receive those benefits, or the actuarial equivalent thereof, while outside the foreign country regardless of the duration of the absence.

The Commissioner of Social Security has delegated the authority to make such a finding to the Associate Commissioner for International Policy. Under that authority, the Associate Commissioner for International Policy has approved a finding that the Czech Republic, as of January 1, 1993, has a social insurance system of general application which:

- (a) pays periodic benefits, or the actuarial equivalent thereof, on account of old age, retirement, or death; and
- (b) permits United States citizens who are not citizens of the Czech Republic

and who qualify for the relevant benefits to receive those benefits, or their actuarial equivalent, while outside of the Czech Republic, regardless of the duration of the absence of these individuals from the Czech Republic.

Accordingly, it is hereby determined and found that the Czech Republic has in effect, as of January 1, 1993, a social insurance system which meets the requirements of section 202(t)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 402(t)(2)).

This is our first finding under section 202(t) of the Social Security Act for the Czech Republic. Before January 1993, the United States did not recognize the Czech Republic as an independent nation. Czechoslovakia divided into two separate states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, on January 1, 1993. At that time, and until January 1996, the Czech Republic continued to use the old Czechoslovak social insurance system which was determined to meet the provisions of Section 202(t)(2) of the Social Security Act on July 1, 1968. The Czech Republic also considered itself bound by the Diplomatic Notes on reciprocity of payments that were exchanged between the United States and Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the addendum in 1969.

The new social insurance law, the Pension Insurance Act, entered into force in the Czech Republic on January 1, 1996. Prior to that date, Czech citizens met an exception under the provisions of section 202(t)(2) based on the old Czechoslovak law that was still in effect.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Donna Powers, Room 1104, West High Rise Building, P.O. Box 17741, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235, (410) 965-3568.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance: Program Nos. 96.001 Social Security—Disability Insurance; 96.002 Social Security—Retirement Insurance; 96.004 Social Security—Survivors Insurance)

Dated: October 24, 1997.

**James A. Kissko,**

*Associate Commissioner for International Policy.*

[FR Doc. 97-28770 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

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## SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

### Senior Executive Service; Performance Review Board Membership

**AGENCY:** Social Security Administration.

**ACTION:** Notice of Senior Executive Service Performance Review Board Membership.

Title 5, U.S. Code, Section 4314(c)(4) of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, Pub. L. 95-454, requires that the appointment of Performance Review Board members be published in the **Federal Register**.

The following persons will serve on the Performance Review Board which oversees the evaluation of performance appraisals of Senior Executive Service members of the Social Security Administration:

Kathleen M. Adams  
Eli N. Donkar  
Glennalee K. Donnelly  
Armando A. Gonzalez  
Charlotte A. J. Hardnett  
W. Burnell Hurt  
Carolyn J. Shearin-Jones  
Gordon M. Sherman  
Barbara S. Sledge  
Miguel A. Torrado

Dated: October 21, 1997.

**Paul D. Barnes,**

*Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources.*  
[FR Doc. 97-28769 Filed 10-29-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4190-29-P

## SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

### Office of the Commissioner; 1998 Cost-of-Living Increase and Other Determinations

**AGENCY:** Social Security Administration.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Commissioner has determined—

(1) A 2.1 percent cost-of-living increase in Social Security benefits under title II of the Social Security Act (the Act), effective for December 1997;

(2) An increase in the Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) monthly benefit amounts under title XVI of the Act for 1998 to \$494 for an eligible individual, \$741 for an eligible individual with an eligible spouse, and \$247 for an essential person;

(3) The national average wage index for 1996 to be \$25,913.90;

(4) The Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) contribution and benefit base to be \$68,400 for remuneration paid in 1998 and self-employment income earned in taxable years beginning in 1998;

(5) For beneficiaries under age 65, the monthly exempt amount under the Social Security retirement earnings test for taxable years ending in calendar year 1998 to be \$760;

(6) The dollar amounts ("bend points") used in the benefit formula for workers who become eligible for benefits in 1998 and in the formula for computing maximum family benefits;

(7) The amount of earnings a person must have to be credited with a quarter of coverage in 1998 to be \$700;

(8) The "old-law" contribution and benefit base to be \$50,700 for 1998;

(9) The monthly amount of substantial gainful activity applicable to statutorily blind individuals in 1998 to be \$1,050;

(10) The domestic worker coverage threshold to be \$1,100 for 1998; and

(11) The OASDI fund ratio to be 152.9 percent for 1997.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Jeffrey L. Kunkel, Office of the Chief Actuary, Social Security Administration, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235, (410) 965-3013. For information on eligibility or claiming benefits, call 1-800-772-1213. A summary of the information in this announcement is available in a recorded message by telephoning (410) 965-3053. Information relating to this announcement is also available on the Internet. The address is <http://www.ssa.gov/OACT/COLA/Intro.html>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Commissioner is required by the Act to publish within 45 days after the close of the third calendar quarter of 1997 the benefit increase percentage and the revised table of "special minimum" benefits (section 215(i)(2)(D)). Also, the Commissioner is required to publish on or before November 1 the national average wage index for 1996 (section 215(a)(1)(D)), the OASDI fund ratio for 1997 (section 215(i)(2)(C)(ii)), the OASDI contribution and benefit base for 1998 (section 230(a)), the amount of earnings required to be credited with a quarter of coverage in 1998 (section 213(d)(2)), the monthly exempt amounts under the Social Security retirement earnings test for 1998 (section 203(f)(8)(A)), the formula for computing a primary insurance amount for workers who first become eligible for benefits or die in 1998 (section 215(a)(1)(D)), and the formula for computing the maximum amount of benefits payable to the family of a worker who first becomes eligible for old-age benefits or dies in 1998 (section 203(a)(2)(C)).

#### Cost-of-Living Increases

**General.** The cost-of-living increase is 2.1 percent for benefits under titles II and XVI of the Act.

Under title II, OASDI benefits will increase by 2.1 percent beginning with the December 1997 benefits, which are payable in January 1998. This increase is based on the authority contained in section 215(i) of the Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

Under title XVI, Federal SSI payment levels will also increase by 2.1 percent

effective for payments made for the month of January 1998 but paid on December 31, 1997. This is based on the authority contained in section 1617 of the Act (42 U.S.C. 1382f). The percentage increase effective January 1998 is the same as the title II percentage increase and the annual payment amount is rounded, when not a multiple of \$12, to the next lower multiple of \$12.

#### Automatic Benefit Increase

**Computation.** Under section 215(i) of the Act, the third calendar quarter of 1997 is a cost-of-living computation quarter for all the purposes of the Act. The Commissioner is, therefore, required to increase benefits, effective with December 1997, for individuals entitled under section 227 or 228 of the Act, to increase primary insurance amounts of all other individuals entitled under title II of the Act, and to increase maximum benefits payable to a family. For December 1997, the benefit increase is the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers from the third quarter of 1996 through the third quarter of 1997.

Section 215(i)(1) of the Act provides that the Consumer Price Index for a cost-of-living computation quarter shall be the arithmetic mean of this index for the 3 months in that quarter. The arithmetic mean is rounded, if necessary, to the nearest 0.1. The Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers for each month in the quarter ending September 30, 1996, is: for July 1996, 154.3; for August 1996, 154.5; and for September 1996, 155.1. The arithmetic mean for this calendar quarter is 154.6. The corresponding Consumer Price Index for each month in the quarter ending September 30, 1997, is: for July 1997, 157.5; for August 1997, 157.8; and for September 1997, 158.3. The arithmetic mean for this calendar quarter is 157.9. Thus, because the Consumer Price Index for the calendar quarter ending September 30, 1997, exceeds that for the calendar quarter ending September 30, 1996 by 2.1 percent, a cost-of-living benefit increase of 2.1 percent is effective for benefits under title II of the Act beginning December 1997.

**Title II Benefit Amounts.** In accordance with section 215(i) of the Act, in the case of insured workers and family members for whom eligibility for benefits (i.e., the worker's attainment of age 62, or disability or death before age 62) occurred before 1998, benefits will increase by 2.1 percent beginning with benefits for December 1997 which are payable in January 1998. In the case of