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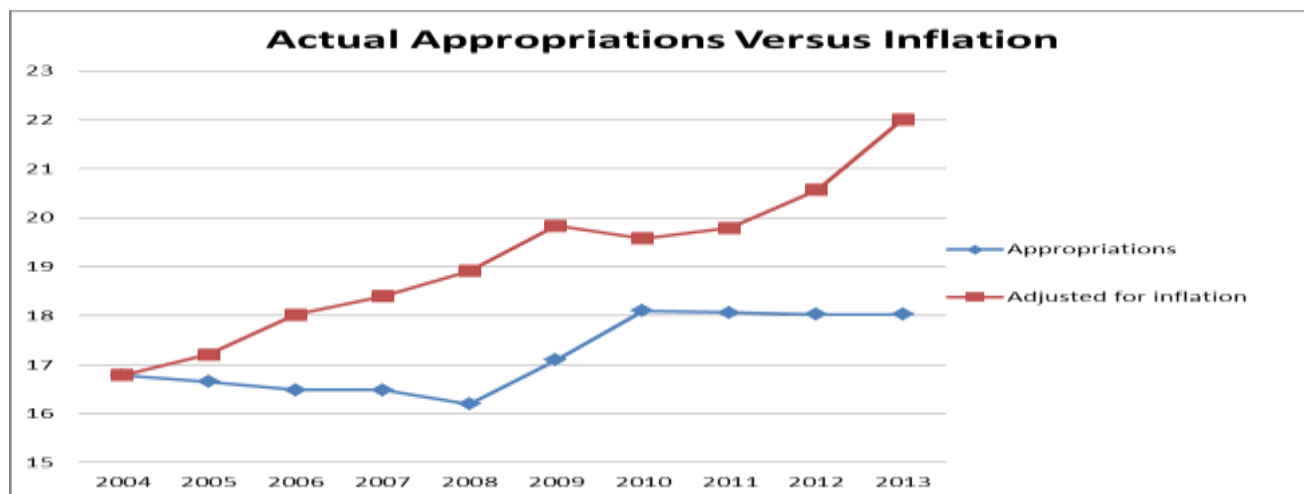
**Protection and Advocacy for Individual Rights (PAIR)
Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations Recommendation- \$22 million**

Background/ Funding History

The Protection and Advocacy for Individuals Rights (PAIR) program is authorized through the Rehabilitation Act. The PAIR program is designed to protect the rights of all people with disabilities not eligible for other protection and advocacy programs created by Congress.

More children and adults with disabilities are eligible for the PAIR program than any other Protection and Advocacy program. Because of this, PAIR receives the lowest funding support per person. From 2004 to 2008, PAIR was cut almost every year, and in FY 2009 and FY 2010 it received modest increases first to \$17 million and then \$18 million. The program has then been reduced through the across-the-board cuts contained in year-end appropriations bills, and level funded since FY 2012. In order for the PAIR program to live up to its mission of helping children and adults with disabilities become independent and self-sufficient people fully integrated into the community, adequate funding must be provided.

NDRN recommends a funding level of \$22 million for FY 2014.



Current Program Responsibilities

PAIR covers individuals with physical disabilities, such as spinal cord injury and amputations; sensory disabilities, such as blindness and deafness; and neurological impairments, such as multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy. Critical disability advocacy issues addressed by PAIR include assistance for people with disabilities to obtain services necessary to live independently, receive an education, maintain employment, and have access to transportation and housing to be fully integrated into the community.

The need for PAIR services grows as the number of people with disabilities increases due to aging, illness, accidents, advances in healthcare, and longer life expectancy. Additionally, a high number of the soldiers wounded in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, many of whom have multiple disabilities, are eligible for PAIR assistance.

PAIR advocacy also plays an important role in reducing the need for other governmental benefits and programs. For example, a person who remains employed because of PAIR advocacy may not need to receive Social Security benefits. A person who leaves an expensive institutional setting to live in a community setting not only has the chance for a better life, but saves substantial federal Medicaid dollars and helps fulfill the community integration promise of the United States Supreme Court decision in Olmstead v. L.C.. Rapidly growing demand for services by children and adults with disabilities far exceeds the resources appropriated for this critical program.

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