



U.S. Department of Justice

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October 30, 2003

The Honorable J. Kelley Arnold
United States Magistrate Judge
United States District Court for the
Western District of Washington
1717 Pacific Avenue
Tacoma, WA 98402

Re: General Consent to Disposition by Magistrate Judge in Social Security Cases

Dear Judge Arnold:

This letter will serve to memorialize the substance of our conversation on Thursday, October 22, 2003. Effective immediately, the Commissioner of Social Security hereby consents, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(c)(1), to the disposition by U.S. Magistrate Judge of all cases filed in the Western District of Washington which seek judicial review under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g) of final administrative decisions concerning the denial or partial denial of Social Security disability benefits by the Commissioner, including claims for attorneys fees asserted in such cases.

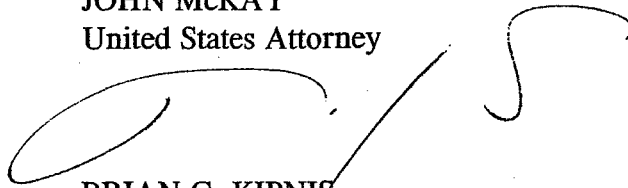
The Commissioner wishes to reserve her right to withdraw her consent in any individual case. We agree to exercise that right, if at all, by filing a written notice with the Court by no later than the date that we file our response to the complaint. Further, the Commissioner also wishes to reserve her right to withdraw her general consent at any time.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

JOHN McKAY
United States Attorney

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. C. KIPNIS", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

BRIAN C. KIPNIS
Assistant United States Attorney
Chief, Civil Division

cc: Ms. Lucille Gonzales Meis
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