

## **The Secret ALJ Policy Comes to an End**

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SSA has reviewed its decision to not disclose the name of the ALJ assigned to hear a case until the day of the hearing. As a result, SSA and ODAR are making the following changes as a result of the review.

- Beginning on April 20 [2013], SSA will resume disclosing the name of the ALJ assigned to a hearing when it sends out a Notice of Hearing. (Note: Under SSA rules, this Notice must be sent at least twenty days before the hearing, but typically we send it out 60-90 days prior to the hearing.)
- In addition, beginning on April 20, SSA will add the ALJ's name to the Appointed Representative Services (ARS) internet application. ARS users represent claimants in about 85% of all represented cases currently pending in ODAR.
- SSA encourages representatives who are not signed up for ARS to ask about registering in their local hearing office. Registered ARS users can access up-to-date electronic folders for their clients, download hearing recordings, and access case status and scheduling information in one convenient location.

If you do not have access to the Hearing Office Status Report and/or received a hearing notice mailed before April 20, you may still need to file a FOIA request to obtain the name of the ALJ. Although, starting after April 20, it may be a good idea to first ask hearing office staff for the name of the ALJ.