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Newsroom: Maguire '96 on SSA Fee Reductions

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Newsroom

Maguire '96 on SSA Fee Reductions

The Social Security Administration frequently reduces lawyers' fee requests. Steve Maguire '96 spoke to Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly about his experience.

From Rhode Island Lawyers Weekly: "[Lawyer challenges fee reduction, with some success](#)" by Julie McMahon



CRANSTON, R.I., May 27, 2013: After devoting more than 74 hours to *O'Connor v. Colvin*, Cranston lawyer **Stephen P. Maguire [RWU Law '96]** believed the fee request he submitted under the Equal Access to Justice Act was perfectly reasonable.

The Social Security Administration apparently thought otherwise: The agency's commissioner contested Maguire's \$13,000 fee — at an hourly rate of \$180.59 — and asked that it be slashed by more than 50 percent. Maguire then had to justify the sum before the U.S. District Court, where he had previously appealed his client's Social Security Disability Income claim. When all was said and done, Magistrate Judge Patricia A. Sullivan determined the award should be \$11,000. [...]

Maguire recently spoke to Lawyers Weekly reporter Julie McMahon about the *O'Connor* case:

Q. How often are the fees you request under the Equal Access to Justice Act disputed?

A. [The Social Security Administration's lawyers] always [try] to reduce the fee. Sometimes they are more reasonable than other times, but sometimes they are unreasonable. Anytime the fee is over \$7,000 you run into a dispute. If it's over that, it's been a difficult case and it's hard to do — but it's still a lot of money on their end. I think the general counsel for the commissioner is required to get some kind of reduction. It exceeds the authority of the first-level decision makers. [...]

For full story, click [here](http://rilawyersweekly.com/blog/2013/05/23/lawyer-challenges-fee-reduction-with-some-success/). [<http://rilawyersweekly.com/blog/2013/05/23/lawyer-challenges-fee-reduction-with-some-success/>]