



IN FOCUS

with Colvin Law

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Social Security Releases New Hearing Office Workload Data

The Social Security Administration recently released their updated end of calendar year 2015 Workload Data Report for each of their hearing offices across the United States. One of the major hurdles in any Social Security disability claim is the wait time that a Claimant is confronted with when pursuing his or her claim. The chart below details each ODAR/hearing office that we regularly represent Claimants before and the average processing time in terms of number of days once a Claimant's file reaches the ODAR/hearing office to when a decision is made. We have also included the average wait time until a hearing is held from the time a claimant's file reaches the ODAR/hearing office. You

will note that each of the hearing offices in our region all exceed a one year wait time once a Claimant's file reaches the respective hearing office before a hearing is held before an Administrative Law Judge. While the averages detailed on the chart below are certainly an average, the wait time could be shorter or it could be a little bit longer. However, it is our experience that the overall averages reported by Social Security are an accurate representation and good indicator for each ODAR/hearing office. We hope that you find this information both informative and helpful as one of the many services that our office performs in keeping our clients fully informed of the Social Security claim process.

HEARING OFFICE WORKLOAD DATA

End of Calendar Year 2015 (For Reporting Purposes: 09/26/2015 through 12/25/2015)

Ranking out of 164	Office Location	Judges	ALJ Dispositions Per Day Per ALJ	Number of Cases	Average Processing (Days)	Average wait time until hrg. held in Months
62	Florence, AL	7	1.91	4851	486	14
27	Franklin, TN	9	2.12	6373	509	16
134	Birmingham, AL	18	1.63	12472	516	16
59	Nashville, TN	11	1.92	5559	469	14
90	Atl., GA: North	12	1.80	6629	580	18
45	Chattanooga, TN	10	1.99	6994	569	18
82	Knoxville, TN	14	1.83	6780	543	17

If you or a loved one become disabled or are no longer able to work, please do not hesitate to contact our office regarding how we might assist with a potential Social Security disability claim. Our office has over 20 years of experience in regularly representing deserving Claimants at all levels of the appeals process including a Federal District Court Civil Action if necessary.

Tips for Applying for SSD Benefits – We Are Here to Help

Have you, a loved one or friend recently considered applying for SSD benefits? Are you overwhelmed by all of the forms? Do you have absolutely no idea where to start? We're here to help make this arduous process easier with "Tips for Tullahoma Area Residents Applying for SSD Benefits" on our website: (<http://www.colvin-law.com/social-security-disability/tullahoma-disability-tips/>).

In addition, here is the link for the initial application process with the Social Security Administration (www.ssa.gov/disability/determination/html). As always this is simply our way of trying to assist you as you navigate the system. If you are seriously thinking about pursuing your benefits claim, please contact us directly via 931-962-1004. We're here for you.



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ATTORNEY AT LAW
"BOLD APPROACH. CLIENT FOCUSED."





Individual Responsibility or Corporate Manipulation? The Real Hot Coffee Case



Hot Coffee is a 2011 documentary film, directed by Susan Saladoff (an attorney with 26 years' experience), that premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and later aired on HBO. This informative film currently streams on Netflix.

Most people only know *Liebeck v. McDonald's* as the "hot coffee case." Many use the case as proof of frivolous lawsuits brought by people who just want a big payday. *Hot Coffee* aims to tell the story behind the "real" hot coffee case.

The film reveals the commonly held belief that a "young woman" decided to sue McDonald's after she drove her car through a fast food drive-through, carelessly spilled coffee on herself and sustained minor burns due to her being irresponsible and needing to be "warned" that her hot coffee would be hot. Most people view the jury verdict as outrageous because a jury decided to give her \$2.7 million in damages just because she didn't realize her hot coffee would be hot. This is the story that most people believe when they think of the hot coffee lawsuit, but it couldn't be further from the truth.

The film details the little known facts involved in the Liebeck case. Ms. Liebeck was actually a grandmotherly 78-year-old woman, who was a "passenger" in a parked car, and she simply opened the lid of her McDonald's coffee to put cream and sugar in it. Ms. Liebeck did not have minor injuries. In reality, she sustained severe second- and third-degree burns all over her groin area. The McDonald's coffee that severely injured Ms. Liebeck was scalding hot, similar to the radiator temperature of a car while being driven. The trial revealed that McDonald's instructed its franchises to keep their coffee at a holding temperature of 180-190 degrees Fahrenheit. More troubling is the revelation that McDonald's had received at least 700 burn complaints over a ten-year period.

Not only does the film present the actual facts in Ms. Liebeck's case, but Ms. Saladoff shows the real reason the American public has heard so much inaccurate information about Ms. Liebeck: A "big business" public relations campaign sought to manipulate the media in order to advance their interests in obtaining tort reform legislation. Ms. Saladoff's documentary film raises the alarm for the American public to investigate the truth on their own and not blindly believe whatever the media tells them. As shown in the documentary, the facts in this case as presented in the popular media weren't anything close to the truth.

So the next time you read an outrageous story that is being used to prove an argument, take the time to investigate all viewpoints and remember there are ALWAYS two sides to every story and the truth is probably somewhere in between. The "hot coffee" case is a reminder of how public opinion can be manipulated against the greater good. As citizens, we should be able to protect our families and not allow our American court system to be influenced by false information in favor of powerful corporations that lobby against just compensation.

Facebook Users: Friendly and Trusting

Are you an average social networker? If so, you have about 229 Facebook friends, according to a recent Pew study, *Social Networking Sites and Our Lives*.

Just who are these "friends?" The average list includes:

- High school friends: 22 percent
- Extended family: 12 percent
- Co-workers: 10 percent
- College friends: 9 percent
- Immediate family: 8 percent
- Voluntary groups: 7 percent
- Neighbors: 2 percent



And chances are you trust these people, and people in general. The study found that "a Facebook user who uses the site multiple times per day is 43 percent more likely than other Internet users and more than three times as likely as non-Internet users to feel that most people can be trusted."

Our Love for Smartphones

You love your smartphone, but do you sleep with it?

According to a survey of 3,700 "mobile workers" conducted by mobile service provider iPass, 61 percent sleep with their smartphones, and 38 percent wake up in the middle of the night to check email.

Thirty-one percent turn to their smartphones immediately upon waking up in the morning, and 30 percent check their messages every six to 12 minutes even when they're not officially on the clock. Not surprising, 29 percent in the survey said mobile technology was causing friction in their relationships. Remember when we didn't even have cell phones, much less smartphones? Try to keep this in mind as you go through your day and through life.



Slow Cooker Chili



- 1 pound ground beef
- 3/4 cup diced onion
- 3/4 cup diced celery
- 3/4 cup diced green bell pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 (10.75 ounce) cans tomato puree
- 1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans with liquid
- 1 (15 ounce) can kidney beans, drained
- 1 (15 ounce) can cannellini beans with liquid
- 1/2 tablespoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 3/4 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon hot pepper sauce

Prep 15 m | Cook 8 h | Ready In 8 h 15 m

1. Place the beef in a skillet over medium heat, and cook until evenly brown. Drain grease.
2. Place the beef in a slow cooker, and mix in onion, celery, green bell pepper, garlic, tomato puree, kidney beans, and cannellini beans. Season with chili powder, parsley, salt, basil, oregano, black pepper, and hot pepper sauce.
3. Cover, and cook 8 hours on Low.

Referrals We want you to think of us as your law firm. If you have a legal matter that needs attention, let us know. If we can't handle the matter, we will refer you to a firm that can. Please feel free to refer us to your friends and family for their legal needs. A referral from a former client or friend is the greatest compliment our firm can receive. We welcome the opportunity to help. Thank you!

Get on pace for a healthy New Year!

Regular exercise is an important part of maintaining your health. Going to the gym once a month won't do it, no matter how hard you work out that day. When you're busy, or tired, or bored, skipping your workout can sound attractive. Here's how to fight the temptation to avoid exercise when you're not in the mood:

- Redefine "exercise." You don't have to spend hours at the health club to stay in shape. Keep track of your daily activity and try to incorporate healthy behaviors like walking for at least 20 minutes, taking the stairs instead of the elevator, or getting off the bus or train a block early. Exercise will become part of your day, not an added chore.
- Clear your mind. Make a regular date with yourself for exercise and train yourself not to think about all the other tasks you could be doing. Focus on the here and now and don't get distracted by the future or the past.
- Find exercise you enjoy. Most gyms offer a variety of exercise equipment, so choose an activity that makes you feel good while you're doing it, not something you detest no matter how beneficial it may be. Riding a bike through your neighborhood is just as helpful as sitting on a stationary bicycle in the gym.
- Set your own goals. Even if you work with a buddy or trainer, decide for yourself what you want to achieve. Set realistic targets that challenge you, not impossible goals that make you reluctant to try.
- Shorten the duration. Rather than a single hour long session, aim for three 20-minute workouts or four 15-minute workouts a day. People who opt for shorter sessions actually tend to work out more over the course of a week.
- Pick a partner. People who exercise with friend have a higher success rate.

If you set goals and set-up a plan you are much more likely to succeed. You owe it to yourself and your loved ones to get on pace for a healthy new year and a healthy life!

Can't Stop Coughing? Try These Homemade Cures

A lingering cough is an ongoing annoyance—to you, your family, your co-workers, commuters sitting near you on the bus, and practically everyone else within earshot.

If cough syrup, a humidifier, and will power aren't doing the job, you might want to try some of these home remedies:

- Gargle with a mixture of warm water, lemon juice, a tablespoon of salt and a tablespoon of vinegar.

- Chew a little raw garlic, or ginger.
- If you can't stomach the thought of raw garlic or ginger, try chopping it up and adding it to some boiling water. Drink 2-3 cups a day.
- Heat some honey over a low flame and mix in some chopped onion or garlic, then take just a spoonful.

If you've got a persistent cough that won't quit, a visit to the doctor is in order to confirm you're not suffering from something serious.

Client's Bill of Rights

Lawyers will tell you that it is impossible to offer a guarantee in the legal business. **WRONG!** We say that law firm clients should settle for nothing less! Remember, your attorney works for you – not the other way around.

At Colvin Law we are client focused and believe we can promise our clients quality service with personal attention. We believe that as our client you are entitled to have the:

1. Right to loyalty to you and your cause.
2. Right to be updated regularly and in a timely manner as to the progress of your case.
3. Right to our respect.
4. Right to expect competence from our firm and all who work here.
5. Right to know the truth about your case.
6. Right to prompt attention from us.
7. Right to have your legal rights and options explained in plain English without legal mumbo jumbo.
8. Right to a fair written fee agreement with our firm.
9. Right to a fair fee for the work we do.
10. Right to make the ultimate decision on your case.



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A Living Laser Beam May Someday Fight Cancer

What if you could shoot a laser out of your body? The concept isn't as crazy as it sounds (although it may not ever be practical for use in hand-to-hand combat).

Two Harvard physicists have manipulated human cells to produce a concentrated beam of light like a laser.



The scientists took cells from a human kidney and engineered them to produce molecules of GFP (green fluorescent protein), which enables jellyfish to glow naturally. Then they positioned the cells between two very tiny mirrors, and triggered them with bursts of low-energy blue light. The little mirrors forced the light produced into a coherent beam, which is more or less the definition of a laser.

These minuscule lasers could ultimately prove useful in enabling humans to control electronic implants in their brains, the scientists say, and may end up being used to destroy cancer cells—from the inside.

Be Careful with Sugar Intake

A spoonful of sugar may, as Mary Poppins sang, help the medicine go down. But too many spoonfuls will probably increase your need to take medicine in the first place.

Too much sugar—or rather, the unproductive calories it delivers to the body—can lead to weight gain, diabetes, and heart disease, among other health problems.

How much is too much?

An American Heart Association study found that Americans consume an average of 22 teaspoons a day (at least during the period of 2001-2004). AHA guidelines recommend much less: six teaspoons a day for women, and nine teaspoons for men.

Check the labels of the foods you're eating: a lot of sugar can be found in most processed foods. And don't rely on sugar substitutes like high-fructose corn syrup. Though fructose may have less impact on the body's blood sugar and insulin levels, a calorie of fructose has the same impact as a calorie of sugar. As in most things, moderation is key.

