



May 20, 2026

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chairman
Committee on Education and Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Oppose *Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act*.

Dear Chairman Walberg and Ranking Member Scott,

On behalf of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), I am writing urging opposition to legislation scheduled for markup before the House Education and Workforce Committee of the *Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act* on Thursday, May 21st.

NACDD opposes the *Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act* because it would roll back progress toward competitive integrated employment by expanding access to subminimum wage, segregated work at younger ages, undermining Section 511 transition protections and state-led efforts to phase out 14(c) sheltered workshops, and conflicting with the Olmstead integration mandate while proven employer models demonstrate that inclusive, fair-wage employment is both feasible and beneficial.

This bill would weaken long-standing workforce protections for young adults with disabilities by lowering the eligibility age for subminimum wage employment under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act from 24 to 18. Under current law, Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act ensures that young people with disabilities receive transition services, vocational rehabilitation, and informed-choice counseling designed to support pathways toward competitive integrated employment rather than placement in segregated, subminimum wage settings.

This proposal also raises significant concerns under the principles established in *Olmstead v. L.C.*. The Supreme Court's decision affirms that unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities constitutes discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Expanding pathways into segregated, subminimum wage employment runs counter to the nation's obligation to ensure equal opportunity, integration, and access to community life, including in the workplace.



Across the country, State Councils on Developmental Disabilities have been at the forefront of advancing competitive integrated employment and eliminating subminimum wage practices. In several states, Councils have helped lead successful policy and systems change efforts to phase out Section 14(c) certificates and transition away from sheltered workshop models. These reforms reflect a clear and growing national commitment to employment systems that value people with disabilities as part of the general workforce.

To date, seventeen states have eliminated subminimum wage practices entirely, with additional states actively pursuing legislation or administrative action to do the same. Several Committee members represent states that have already eliminated the use of Section 14(c) subminimum wage programs, including California, Oregon, South Carolina, Illinois, Virginia, and Washington. Many additional states are also moving to phase out these outdated policies and expand opportunities for competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities. These state-led efforts demonstrate that transition away from segregated employment models is not only achievable, but already underway across diverse economic and political contexts.

Importantly, employers who have moved away from subminimum wage and sheltered workshop models have demonstrated that inclusive employment systems are both feasible and successful. Businesses that adopt customized employment, supported employment, and inclusive hiring practices consistently report stable productivity, reduced turnover, and stronger workplace culture. Most importantly, these models ensure that workers with disabilities are paid fair wages that reflect the value of their contributions and reinforce workplace dignity and respect.

We are concerned that this legislation would move policy in the opposite direction by undermining progress made by states, families, employers, and people with disabilities themselves. Expanding access to subminimum wage employment at younger ages risks narrowing exposure to competitive integrated employment at a critical transition point in a young person's life and weakening established pathways to community-based work.

Rather than maintaining a system that limits opportunity and keeps individuals with disabilities outside the competitive workforce, the Committee should advance consideration of the bipartisan Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act (H.R. 4771). This legislation reflects core principles of work, dignity, and self-sufficiency by transitioning away from Section 14(c) subminimum wage certificates while ensuring providers and states have the flexibility and resources to successfully move toward competitive integrated employment. The bill is bipartisan in both sponsorship and support and has drawn backing from a broad coalition that includes leading disability organizations such as the National Down Syndrome Society, the American



Association of People with Disabilities, and NACDD, alongside employers and private-sector partners including Microsoft and other for-profit and nonprofit employers who have demonstrated that individuals with disabilities can and do succeed in integrated competitive workplaces. Support from both disability advocates and business leaders underscores that this is not a partisan issue, but a workforce modernization effort that aligns with conservative priorities of expanding employment, reducing dependency, and strengthening employer-driven solutions.

NACDD respectfully urges you to oppose *Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act* and to continue supporting policies that expand competitive integrated employment opportunities for people with disabilities. These efforts strengthen individuals, families, employers, and the broader economy across your Congressional District and the state.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to advancing opportunity, inclusion, and dignity in employment for people with disabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Erin Prangley'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Erin' being more prominent than the last name 'Prangley'.

Erin Prangley
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