

May 20, 2026

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chairman
Committee on Education and Workforce
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and Workforce
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Tim Walberg and Ranking Member Bobby Scott:

As parents, guardians, and family members of adults with disabilities, we write in strong support of H.R. 8736 the Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act. For our families, this issue is not theoretical or political. It affects our children, siblings, and loved ones every single day. We know their strengths, their challenges, and the environments where they are most likely to succeed, feel valued, and live fulfilling lives.

Every person with a disability is different. Some thrive in traditional employment settings, while others benefit from more supportive work environments authorized under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act. There is no one size fits all approach to employment, and families should not be forced into a system that treats everyone as if they have the same needs, abilities, or goals.

Unfortunately, Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act has created unnecessary barriers for many young adults with disabilities. Before individuals under the age of 24 can pursue employment under a 14(c) certificate, they are often pushed into employment settings that are simply not appropriate for them. In many cases, they are required to experience repeated unsuccessful attempts in competitive employment before they are allowed to consider an alternative environment that may better support their long-term success and well-being.

As families, we have watched our loved ones struggle under these requirements. We have seen them lose confidence after being placed in situations where they were set up to fail rather than set up for success. We have seen the frustration, anxiety, and emotional toll that comes from being told that where they want to work or would be best supported is not an option until they fail somewhere else.

For our children and loved ones, work is about far more than a paycheck. It provides purpose, routine, friendships, confidence, and a sense of independence. Supportive work environments often become places where individuals feel safe, respected, and proud of what they contribute. Denying or delaying access to those opportunities has lasting effects not only for employment outcomes, but on the emotional well-being and quality of life for all those involved.

H.R. 8736 takes a compassionate and practical approach to addressing these concerns. By lowering the applicable age from 24 to 18, the bill recognizes that adults with disabilities and their families should be trusted to make informed decisions about employment without unnecessary federal interference. The legislation also ensures individuals are not denied opportunities because of administrative failures related to counseling requirements.

Most importantly, this bill is about preserving choice. It does not eliminate competitive integrated employment opportunities, nor does it prevent anyone from pursuing those paths. Instead, it recognizes that true inclusion means respecting individual needs and allowing people with disabilities to choose the setting where they can thrive.

We strongly believe this legislation is in the best interest of individuals with disabilities and the families who support them. Our loved ones deserve dignity, stability, meaningful opportunities, and the freedom to pursue the path that allows them to live productive and fulfilling lives.

Sincerely,

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