



March 12, 2026

The Honorable Tim Walberg
Chair, House Education and Workforce Committee

Dear Honorable Tim Walberg:

I am writing in support of the *Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act*. For the last 33-plus years, including the last 25 as CEO of Chippewa River Industries, Inc. (CRI), I have had the privilege of working alongside individuals with diverse abilities and witnessing firsthand the importance of preserving choice, dignity, and individualized pathways to employment. The intent behind the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was to expand access to competitive integrated employment. However, as outlined in the Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act (002), the requirements have created barriers that limit employment opportunities for many individuals with disabilities. In fact, 10 years ago when WIOA was voted on, these restrictions were put into place at the very last minute, just prior to a vote on the legislation, making it nearly impossible for a proper review and vetting process.

The federally mandated requirements for individuals under 25 often result in delayed access to employment, repeated unsuccessful placements, disruption in services, or forced living at home. These barriers can undermine confidence and stability, two critical elements for long-term success, while restricting individuals from choosing work environments that align with their strengths and needs. This legislation offers a thoughtful and practical solution. By lowering the age threshold from 25 to 18 and ensuring that technical compliance issues at the state level do not prevent individuals from working under a 14(c) certificate, the bill restores flexibility while preserving accountability. Most importantly, it centers decision-making where it belongs: with the individual, their family, and trusted support providers.

This bill allows organizations like CRI to meet individuals where they are by offering a continuum of employment options that reflect varying levels of readiness, support needs, and personal preference. Employment should not be a one-size-fits-all pathway, and this legislation appropriately recognizes that reality. At CRI, we believe that true inclusion is built on choice, opportunity, and respect for individual autonomy. The Restoration of Employment Choice for Adults with Disabilities Act reinforces these values and ensures that policy aligns with the realities of those it is intended to serve.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

David Lemanski
CEO

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