



United For CHOICE!

www.ateamwisconsin.com
ateamwisconsin@gmail.com

January 26, 2026

Ms. Julie Hocker
Assistant Secretary of Labor for Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Assistant Secretary Hocker,

A-Team U.S.A. is a national disability advocacy organization whose members are significantly intellectually/developmentally disabled individuals who work at Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) under Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, along with their families, guardians, and caregivers/providers. We formed in Wisconsin in 2011 in response to the growing influence of advocates and government officials who sought to eliminate 14(c) and close what they called sheltered workshops—a term we no longer use. We now have chapters in 18 states and are continuing to grow.

We are writing to you regarding the General Accountability Office (GAO) report GAO-25-106471, Subminimum Wage, dated April 29, 2025. For many years, the A-Team has believed that eliminating 14(c) would result in the transition of individuals who want to work into non-work pursuits, while opponents of 14(c) have contended that workers will transition into what is called Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE). We have supported Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI) and others in their defense of 14(c). When Rep. Grothman and the Education and the Workforce Committee of the U.S. Congress requested that GAO determine what happens to individuals when 14(c) is eliminated, as it has been by sixteen states, we were anxious to see the results.

GAO studied two states, Colorado and Oregon, which had eliminated 14(c). These are key takeaways from their report:

- The federal government and the states have poor tracking data on what happens to 14(c) workers. In Oregon, as of 2023, the fate of 54% of the previous 14(c) workers was unknown, mainly because they had dropped out of the Medicaid Long Term Care system. (Are these people just sitting at home?) It appears from the report that states are eliminating 14(c) without accurately tracking the result of this action, and in some cases, are not even attempting to track it.

- In Oregon, which accounts for about 90% of the data in the report, only 12% of the original 1,875 14(c) workers were identified as working in CIE as of 2023 (latest data available). For those with the most significant limitations, the percentage is even lower (see Figure 10 in the report). This is a tragedy for those who want to work. Many individuals transitioned to adult day services. Even the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), one of the strongest opponents of 14(c), has stated that "The movement of individuals into non-workday habilitation facilities, instead of into community employment, is not an acceptable outcome of the phase-out of the sub-minimum wage."
- The average number of hours worked per week by CIE workers was 10.8 hours. This is unacceptable for those who want to work full-time or near full-time, which they can do in a 14(c)-work center.

The A-Team hopes that ODEP will seriously consider the GAO report and reverse the position that has been taken by the Department of Labor during the previous administration, i.e., that 14(c) should be eliminated.

Finally, on a personal note, I have a son with Down Syndrome who is significantly limited, both intellectually and physically. Should his 14(c) program go away, he will be heartbroken. There is no way he will achieve CIE. I know this because he has tried a couple of times already without success, and because I know my son and his abilities better than anyone.

Sincerely,



Eric T. Wilson

Parent Leader

A-Team Grassroots System, Inc. 501(c)4