



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES
RESEARCH. EDUCATION. SERVICE

The Honorable Tom Harkin, Chair and
The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 23, 2013

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander,

On behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), I would like to thank you for introducing a bill to reauthorize and strengthen the Workforce Investment Act, including Title V, the Rehabilitation Act. AUCD is a national non-profit organization that represents a network of interdisciplinary Centers advancing policy and practice for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities in their communities.

AUCD believes that the draft bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act is in line with our association's employment policy, which is based upon the presumption of employment for all persons with disabilities and employment first strategies. This bill embraces policies, procedures and practices that support the access, maintenance and advancement in employment by persons with disabilities and that the primary or preferred outcome is competitive integrated employment.

AUCD especially appreciates the Senators' strong focus on increased transition services for youth with significant disabilities. The new National Transition Initiative will ultimately create enduring systems of service delivery and training within states that will increase the number of students who graduate from high school to go on to postsecondary educational opportunities and/or integrated employment with wages that lead to self-sufficiency.

Section 511 of the draft bill is designed to address the current problem of special education students, primarily students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, being tracked from school to jobs that pay less than minimum wage. In order to address this problem, Section 511 requires youth with disabilities, upon leaving school, to apply for services from VR and try out jobs that offer competitive wages before they are eligible to work in any job that pays less than the minimum wage. This section, along with the transition initiative and other positive amendments, will move our country in the right direction.

Given our country's economic challenges and the unemployment statistics, we believe that these policies must be enacted as quickly as possible. AUCD looks forward to working with you to move this bill quickly. For more information, please contact Kim Musheno in our national office at 301-588-8252, ext. 222.

Sincerely,

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