



May 19, 2017

U.S. House of Representatives
Labor Subcommittee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Cole and Ranking Member DeLauro:

In January, The President said that “Millions lifted from welfare to work is not too much to expect...and jobs where Americans prosper and grow are not too much to ask.” That promise and that hope is at odds with the budgetary priorities outlined in the President’s [America First A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again](#). On behalf of the members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Employment and Training Task Force, we write to express our deep concerns that proposed cuts to the Department of Labor will harm the ability of thousands of Americans with disabilities to earn an income and become independent.

CCD is a coalition of approximately 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

The President’s budget, as sent to Congress, proposes to slash fully one fifth of the Department of Labor’s budget. To achieve this \$2.5 billion cut, the document calls for the elimination of "duplicative, unnecessary, unproven, or ineffective" programs while focusing on "highest priority functions." The document, as written, is short on specifics and long on vague promises. One of the few specifics in the document concerns the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). ODEP is directed to eliminate “less critical technical assistance grants” while launching new “an early intervention demonstration project.” The remaining pages that concern DOL outline various other ways to cut “ineffective, duplicative, and peripheral job training grants” while placing “more responsibility for funding” on to States, local groups and employers.

Our nation was founded on the principle that anyone who works hard should be able to get ahead in life. To do that, many Americans workers need access to the training programs provided by the Department of Labor. This is especially true for people with disabilities who deserve the opportunity to earn an income, just like anyone else. By divesting such programs, the America First budget could cost thousands the chance to find a job.

A more efficient workforce system and more effective job training programs are clearly in the best interest of American workers, especially those with serious barriers such as people with disabilities. However, the budget proposals as written could well cost people those opportunities. The proposed changes at ODEP, could eliminate crucial expertise which is helping states achieve incredible outcomes for a population that otherwise would be left out of the workforce. High-quality service to individuals with disabilities is a critical goal of the workforce system. Yet that goal could be impossible without expertise and guidance from ODEP. Further, the President’s budget cuts many programs without identifying more cost-effective solutions.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please contact Kelly Buckland at the National Council on Independent Living (kelly@ncil.org, 202-207-0334 ext. 1104), Aaron Kaufman at the Jewish Federation of North America (Aaron.Kaufman@jewishfederations.org, 202-785-493), Alicia Epstein at SourceAmerica (aepstein@sourceamerica.org, 703-584-3987) or Philip Pauli at RespectAbility (philipp@respectabilityusa.org, 240-483-4134).

Sincerely,

Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)

Center for Public Representation

Institute for Educational Leadership

National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

Respectability

TASH

United Spinal Association