



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 15, 2014

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Hatch:

On behalf of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Veterans and Military Families and Employment and Training Task Forces, we write to applaud your efforts to extend and expand the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to incentivize business hiring of people with disabilities and veterans with service-connected disabilities.

CCD is a coalition of national disability rights, advocacy, consumer, and provider organizations. The Employment and Training Task Force works on issues relevant to the employment of people with disabilities. The Veterans and Military Families Task Force follows issues of concern to veterans with disabilities and military family members with disabilities.

People with disabilities, including those who are also veterans, continually struggle to find employment in their communities. Recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Bureau of Labor Statistics shows the April 2014 unemployment rate for people with disabilities was 12.5 percent compared to 5.6 percent for people without disabilities. In addition, the Bureau of Labor Statistic's 2013 report on the Employment Situation of Veterans found that Gulf War-era II veterans who reported having a service-connected disability had a lower labor force participation rate than veterans from this period with no service-connected disability.

CCD has long advocated for policies to help increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans. The Work Opportunity Tax Credit has been a useful employment tool by providing employers a tax credit for hiring individuals from target populations who consistently face significant barriers to employment. The maximum WOTC tax credit is \$2,400 for hiring a qualified person with a disability and \$9,600 for hiring a qualified veteran with a service-connected disability. Unfortunately, these tax credits expired at the end of 2013.

We were pleased the Senate Finance Committee-approved tax extenders package, which is now under consideration by the full Senate, retroactively extends the employer hiring tax credits for people with disabilities, veterans and other target populations through December 31, 2015. Also, we commend you for expanding WOTC to employers who hire individuals who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or longer. Reports have found that many people with disabilities are part of the long-term unemployed population. Our hope is that extension of these tax credits along with the new federal contractor hiring goals and benchmarks released by the Department of Labor will help to increase new hiring of individuals with disabilities and veterans with service-connected disabilities.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and, in particular, the Employment and Training and Veterans and Military Families Task Forces if you have questions or need our support in garnering support for the WOTC expansion. Thank you for helping to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including veterans.

Sincerely,

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