



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

<sent by email>

March 18, 2021

Dear Senator:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Employment and Training Task Force are pleased to support H.R. 447, the National Apprenticeship Act which passed the House on February 5, 2021. We urge you to support this measure and ensure its passage by the Senate at the earliest opportunity. CCD is a coalition of more than 100 national disability rights, advocacy, consumer, provider and self-advocates organizations representing the more than 61 million Americans with disabilities. The Employment and Training Task Force concerns itself with federal employment programs and policies affecting economic self-sufficiency and opportunity for people with disabilities.

Too often in the past, people with disabilities were not considered when major pieces of workforce legislation were developed. As a result, they did not benefit from many provisions that might have advanced their participation in the labor force. We were thus gratified to see that The National Apprenticeship Act contains a number of provisions targeting people with disabilities that we hope will widen opportunities to take part in the national apprenticeship system.

At the outset, the National Apprenticeship Act directs the Administrator of the National Apprenticeship system to “promote diversity and ensure equal opportunity to participate in programs for apprentices, youth apprentices, and pre-apprentices”, including supporting the “recruitment, employment, and retention of nontraditional apprenticeship populations in programs under the national apprenticeship system in high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand industry sectors and occupations, including women, people of color, individuals with disabilities, individuals impacted by the criminal and juvenile justice system, and individuals with barriers to employment, as applicable.”

The legislation offers technical assistance on how to align activities carried out under this Act with eligible funding from, and planning processes for, the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Higher Education Act. H.R. 447 requires state apprenticeship agencies to prepare annual reports for submission to the Administrator on various performance measures including “the percentage of program participants by race, sex ethnicity and, to the extent practicable, by individuals with disabilities, as compared to such percentages within the working age population who are in the geographical area from which the sponsor usually seeks or reasonably could seek program participants and who meet the minimum eligibility requirements for entry into in the program.”

Under the bill, the Secretary is directed to conduct research for the purpose of improving the management and effectiveness of the programs and activities carried out under this Act including “best practices in increasing participation of nontraditional apprenticeship populations and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, in programs under the national apprenticeship system; and opportunities to scale up effective models under the national apprenticeship system.” A section on encouraging employer participation in programs under the national apprenticeship system specifically mentions those “that target individuals with barriers to employment in youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, or apprenticeship programs, prioritizing nontraditional apprenticeship populations such as women, minorities, long-term unemployed, individuals with a disability, individuals with substance abuse issues, veterans, military spouses, individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals impacted by the criminal or juvenile justice system, and foster and former foster youth.”

In addition, language in Apprenticeship Program Standards would help insure instructors incorporate and use the principles of Universal Design for Learning. This will help assure that more programs are more broadly accessible to youth with barriers to learning, including youth with disabilities.

In concert with the foregoing provisions, we believe many other sections of the legislation could open access to apprenticeships to people with disabilities across the nation. We ask you to support the National Apprenticeship Act and look forward to working with Congress to see this legislation through to enactment.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the task force cochairs - Julie J. Christensen, PhD, LMSW, Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE), [julie@apse.org](mailto:julie@apse.org); Alicia Epstein, SourceAmerica, [aepstein@sourceamerica.org](mailto:aepstein@sourceamerica.org), Phillip Pauli, Respectability, [philipp@respectability.org](mailto:philipp@respectability.org), Susan Prokop, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), [susanp@pva.org](mailto:susanp@pva.org), Dahlia Shaewitz, Institute for Educational Leadership, [shaewitzd@iel.org](mailto:shaewitzd@iel.org)

American Foundation for the Blind  
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)  
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)  
American Printing House for the Blind  
Autism Society of America  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Christopher and Dana Reeve foundation  
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA)  
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation  
Easterseals  
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.  
Institute for Educational Leadership  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
RespectAbility

Spina Bifida Association  
The Arc of the United States  
United Spinal Association  
U.S. International Council on Disabilities  
VetsFirst