



Principles and Recommendations for Tax Reform

September 22, 2017

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is the largest coalition of national organizations working together to advocate for Federal public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

People with disabilities rely on a range of federal programs to live independently in the community. These programs are funded through our federal taxes. They provide multiple life necessities such as housing, education, employment, health care, income support, transportation, and more. They ensure that millions of people with disabilities can live with opportunity, dignity, and independence. As stated by former Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. and inscribed above the entrance to the headquarters of the Internal Revenue Service, *"Taxes are what we pay for a civilized society."*

CCD appreciates the importance of a fair and effective tax system. However, we are concerned that any expected increased economic activity generated by individual and/or corporate tax cuts will not be able to make up for the potential loss of revenue that pays for federal programs that promote independence, inclusion, and community living for people with disabilities. In addition, while people with disabilities benefit from federal tax-funded programs, it is also important to understand during any tax reform process that many people with disabilities are tax payers and that increased opportunities for people with disabilities result in their ability to contribute more to the tax base.

Principles and Recommendations

Process

- Tax reform should be accomplished in a bipartisan manner through regular order with sufficient opportunity for legislators, advocates, and constituents to review and provide feedback on the proposal and legislative language prior to passage.
- Tax reform should be based on generally accepted economic theory and methodology.

Paying for Tax Reform

- Individual or corporate tax cuts or expenditures must not be paid for by cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security or other mandatory or discretionary programs that promote independence, inclusion, and community living for people with disabilities.
- Individual or corporate tax expenditures for education-related programs should not be paid for by cuts to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), or other federal education funds.
- Expenditures (credits, deductions, exclusions, exemptions, preferential rates, or deferrals of tax liability) selected for elimination to pay for individual or corporate tax cuts should include analyses of how they will impact people with disabilities.

Impact on People with Disabilities

- Tax reform should not decrease revenue to an extent that revenue is insufficient to continue to fund the programs and services and supports for people with disabilities at current levels or above.
- Individual or corporate tax cuts must not exacerbate the severe wealth inequality that exists between most Americans (including people with disabilities who disproportionately have low incomes and levels of wealth) and the most prosperous.
- Any improvements to the federal tax code for people with disabilities or their families cannot serve to replace or reduce access to a range of federal programs that promote independence, inclusion, and community living.

Maintain and Improve Existing Provisions

- The following tax provisions targeted to people with disabilities should be maintained:
 - The standard deduction for people who are blind
 - The Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal Deduction
 - The Disabled Access Credit
 - Work Opportunity Tax Credit
 - Impairment-Related Work Expense Deduction
- The charitable deduction should be maintained and improved for the non-profit sector which provides the majority of services and supports for people with disabilities.
- The Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) program should be maintained and the age eligibility increased to at least age 46, with additional improvements to encourage work and savings.
- The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit should be maintained and improved as a critical source of capital to expand the inventory of permanent supportive housing for non-elderly people with severe disabilities as part of the HUD Section 811 Project-Based Rental Assistance program.

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Public Representation
Council for Exceptional Children
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Goodwill Industries International
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Council for Behavioral Health
National Disability Institute
National Disability Rights Network
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives
National Respite Coalition
Parent to Parent USA
SourceAmerica
Special Needs Alliance
The Advocacy Institute
The Arc of the United States
United Cerebral Palsy
United Spinal Association