



September 28, 2016

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Van Hollen:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Employment and Training Task Force commend you for introducing the Transition to Independence Act, HR 5903. 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. The Employment and Training Task Force focuses on issues relevant to the employment of people with disabilities, particularly those programs and initiatives funded under the Rehabilitation Act and the employment and training programs administered by the Department of Labor. This task force collaborates with other CCD task forces concerning the Social Security Administration's efforts to facilitate the employment of individuals receiving Social Security benefits.

In its final report, the Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) on Increasing Competitive, Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities highlighted the low employment participation rate of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those with other significant disabilities. Among the Advisory Committee's many recommendations for addressing this national crisis were several tailored toward identifying the most effective way to deliver services resulting in competitive, integrated employment outcomes. The Transition to Independence Act represents a significant step forward in promoting full integration of people with disabilities into the economic mainstream of this nation. By providing financial incentives to states to move individuals with significant disabilities out of segregated, subminimum wage settings into competitive, integrated employment opportunities, HR 5903 will foster skills building and career advancement for thousands of people with disabilities as well as providing the necessary data to expand successful practices nationwide.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation. We look forward to its passage at the earliest opportunity.

American Network of Community Options and Resources

APSE

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Lutheran Services in America Disability Network

Mental Health America

National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services

National Council on Independent Living

National Disability Institute

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Down Syndrome Society

Paralyzed Veterans of America

The Arc of the United States

The Jewish Federations of North America

United Cerebral Palsy

United Spinal Association