

## **Bipartisan, Bicameral Group of Lawmakers Introduce Bill to End Subminimum Wages for Workers with Disabilities**

**WASHINGTON** – Today, Ranking Member Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (D-VA-03), House Committee on Education and Workforce, Representative Pete Sessions (R-TX-17), Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), and Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) introduced the Act. This is a bipartisan, bicameral proposal, which would phase out the use of subminimum wages for workers with disabilities and help transition them into fully integrated, competitive employment.

Under Section 14(c) of the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, workers with disabilities can legally be paid far below the federal minimum wage, sometimes less than \$1 an hour. This bill ends that practice over five years, invests \$300 million in state and local transition efforts, and ensures all workers with disabilities can earn fair wages and work alongside their peers.

Currently, nearly 40,000 people with disabilities are still employed under this policy. This legislation ensures they are no longer left behind in our workforce and brings federal labor law into alignment with the goals of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

*“It is long past time for Congress to phase out the subminimum wage for workers with disabilities and expand access to fulfilling employment and economic self-sufficiency. By fostering collaboration between employers and services providers, this bipartisan legislation makes clear that it is not only possible, but beneficial, to invest in fully integrated and competitive jobs for people with disabilities. We must take this next step to ensure that every worker can succeed in the workplace and earn a fair wage,”* **said Ranking Member Scott.**

*“Disabled Americans deserve the opportunity to compete and succeed in today's workforce. Unfortunately, subminimum wage practices continue to unfairly prevent many individuals from earning the full value of their contributions and prevent disabled individuals from retaining necessary benefits should they receive a promotion. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act, which ends these practices and encourages disabled Americans to fully participate in our workforce without constraints. While this is an important step, there is still much work to be done to build a competitive and fair workforce. I remain committed to continuing in this fight,”* **said Representative Sessions.**

*“Americans with disabilities deserve fair pay for their work. But the subminimum wage has denied far too many people with disabilities that promise for far too long. This bipartisan legislation puts an end to that unjust practice nationwide and invests in opportunities for workers with disabilities to strengthen their economic independence,”* **said Senator Van Hollen.**

*“Those with disabilities contribute in valuable ways to our communities. There is dignity and hope in work, and they should never be underpaid simply because they live with a disability. I’m*

*proud to work with my colleagues to end this discriminatory practice and ensure fair pay to those with disabilities in the workforce,” said Senator Daines.*

The [Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act](#):

- **Create a competitive state grant program** to assist states with transitioning all 14(c) certificate holders to models that support competitive, integrated employment for individuals with disabilities and ensuring the availability of wraparound services needed to support individuals as they move into competitive integrated employment. States will be able to apply for these transformation grants and must establish an advisory committee that includes key stakeholders (including employers, organizations specializing in employment for individuals with disabilities, Medicaid agencies, AbilityOne contractors, individuals with disabilities and their families, and vocational rehabilitation agencies). States that successfully complete a grant will be eligible to receive a 25 percent increase in the allotment for supported employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- **Create a competitive grant program for current 14(c) certificate holders**, which are located in states that do not apply for the state grant, to transition their business models to support individuals with disabilities in competitive, integrated employment.
- **Immediately freeze the issuance of any new 14(c) certificates** by the DOL and phase out the use of existing 14(c) certificates over five years until employees are paid at least the federal minimum wage.
- **Establish a technical assistance (TA) center to support all entities**—even those not receiving the transformation grants—to transition to competitive, integrated employment. The TA center, which will be funded by DOL, is tasked with disseminating information about best practices, lessons learned, and models for transition to all entities transitioning to competitive, integrated employment.
- **Require reporting and evaluation** on the progress of creating and expanding the service delivery structure to support workers with disabilities in competitive, integrated settings and the inclusive wraparound services they receive when not working. States and 14(c) certificate holders will also be required to report on their grant activities, evaluate changes in employment for individuals with disabilities, report average wage information, and evaluate employer actions taken to comply with the phase out of 14(c) and transformation grants.

The *Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act* is supported by: Autistic Self-Advocacy Network (ASAN), Melwood, The Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), National Federation of the Blind (NFB), Association of University Centers on Disabilities

(AUCD), National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), Microsoft, Alliance for Expanding America's Workforce, National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS), Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF), Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), CEO Commission for Disability Employment, Applied Self-Direction, Spina Bifida Association, Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), National Organization on Disability, Communication First, United Spinal Association, ANCOR, National Employment Law Project (NELP), American Association of People with Disabilities, American Council of the Blind (ACB), Allies for Independence, National Association of Councils of Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), Source America, National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC), Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA), National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Autism Society of America, Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), National Industries for the Blind, and American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

For the **bill text** of the *Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act*, click [here](#).

For a **fact sheet** on the *Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act*, click [here](#).

For a **section-by-section** of the *Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act*, click [here](#).