



February 22, 2021

Chair John Yarmuth
House Budget Committee
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Jason Smith
House Budget Committee
204-E Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Yarmuth and Ranking Member Smith:

As the Budget Committee marks-up the next COVID-19 relief package, the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) writes to strongly encourage you to ensure the federal minimum wage increase as included in the House Education and Labor Committee's portion of the FY21 budget reconciliation package are preserved.

NDRN is the voluntary membership association for Protection & Advocacy (P&A) and Client Assistance Program (CAP) agencies. The P&A and CAP agencies are a nationwide network of congressionally mandated, cross disability organizations operating in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the US Virgin Islands). There is also a P&A and CAP affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations located in the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

Specifically, the federal minimum wage increase included in the House Education and Labor Committee's portion of the FY21 budget reconciliation package would raise the federal minimum wage and phase out section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a provision that permits employers to pay some people with disabilities even less than the minimum wage. NDRN has long advocated for an elimination of sub-minimum wages and segregated employment for people with disabilities and we are grateful that this important provision is included. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 established as a priority competitive integrated employment, where people with disabilities work in mainstream jobs alongside, and are paid comparable wages to, co-workers without disabilities. WIOA furthers the goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act to advance the economic self-sufficiency of people with disabilities. Sub-minimum wage certificates do nothing more than perpetuate a life of poverty and dependency for people with disabilities and runs contrary to the national priority of competitive integrated employment as established by WIOA. It is critical that any federal minimum wage increase included in the next COVID-19 relief package also put an end to the outdated and unfair practice of paying sub-minimum wages.

Again, NDRN encourages you to ensure the federal minimum wage increase and phase out of 14(c) as included in the House Education and Labor Committee's portion of the

FY21 budget reconciliation package are preserved. We look forward to working with you to enact this bill into law. Please contact Cyrus Huncharek, Senior Public Policy Analyst, at cyrus.huncharek@ndrn.org should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Curtis L. Decker", enclosed in a light blue rectangular box.

Curtis L. Decker
Executive Director