



November 12, 2021

Senator Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) would like to thank you for introducing the *Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act*. NDRN and our members, the Protection & Advocacy agencies, have long advocated for an elimination of subminimum wages and segregated employment for people with disabilities. Research has consistently shown that full employment of people with disabilities is not only possible but also probable, if individuals are provided the supports and services they need. We should be pursuing every path possible to support people with disabilities who want to work for a competitive wage.

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.

Sub-minimum wages perpetuate a life of poverty and dependency for people with disabilities, and they run contrary to the national priority of competitive integrated employment. 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 also furthers the goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act to advance the economic self-sufficiency of people with disabilities. It is past time that we put an end to the outdated and unfair practice of paying sub-minimum wages. The Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act is a clear and logical next step in the progression towards fulfilling Congress's mandate to support fully integrated, competitive employment for people with disabilities.

Again, NDRN applauds you for introducing this important piece of legislation, and we are excited to work 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", is located below the word "Sincerely,".

Curtis L. Decker
Executive Director