



July 23, 2024

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Chair
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Committee
428A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joni Ernst, Ranking Member
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Committee
428A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Shaheen & Ranking Member Ernst:

On behalf of SourceAmerica I write regarding a recommendation for expanding and improving H.R. 7989, ThinkDIFFERENTLY About Disability Employment Act. Thank you for your leadership on issues related to the employment of people with disabilities. Your unwavering support of the most underrepresented population in the country is greatly appreciated.

In its current form, H.R. 7989 requires the Small Business Administration and the National Council on Disability to establish a memorandum of understanding to conduct the following activities:

- Aid individuals with disabilities who desire to become entrepreneurs or to be self-employed
- Help individuals with disabilities find employment at small business concerns
- Assist small businesses with hiring individuals with disabilities and with accessibility issues applicable to individuals with disabilities

SourceAmerica recommends that H.R. 7989 include in any memorandum of understanding the U.S. AbilityOne Commission and more specifically its network of nonprofit organizations who employ individuals with disabilities.


As you are aware the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, along with its network of more than 400 nonprofit organizations throughout the United States, has been the leader in disability employment for more than 80 years, especially as it relates to employment on federal contracts.

We believe that any efforts to increase employment within this space would be greatly benefitted by those nonprofits who can leverage decades of best practices, are leaders in employment supports and have an unmatched depth of understanding of employment challenges faced by individuals with disabilities including but not limited to disruption, health care, transportation and interaction of wages with other benefits.

Combining the expertise of the Small Business Administration, the National Council of Disability, and the U.S. AbilityOne Commission along with its network of nonprofit organizations will ensure meaningful and lasting employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

We urge that H.R. 7989 be amended to include the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, the nation's largest source of employment for people with disabilities, and its network of nonprofit agencies as party to any proposed memorandum of understanding regarding disability employment and any required report to Congress. Doing so will ensure that 80-plus years of experience operating in the disability employment space is leveraged in a way that will maximize any new policies or initiatives to create job opportunities for people with disabilities.

Sincerely,



Ricardo Terrazas
Vice President, Government Affairs
Source America