



July 11, 2024

The Honorable Bernard Sanders, Chair
United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Sanders and Ranking Member Cassidy:

We applaud the Committee's work on reauthorizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. As you are aware, this piece of legislation provides critical workforce support services for job seekers, including people with disabilities.

SourceAmerica[®] joins the leaders in the disability advocacy community in reiterating our support for the inclusion of the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act (S. 533 and H.R. 1263) in the WIOA markup package. We applaud the End Subminimum Wage Coalition efforts to ensure that the Committee considers this important piece of legislation during the markup process.

Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act authorizes employers to pay their workers with disabilities subminimum wages. As of May 1, approximately 40,500 people with disabilities were still being paid below the minimum wage. It is critical that TCIEA is included in the WIOA markup package to advance the legislation in the 118th Congress.

SourceAmerica is a central nonprofit agency that facilitates the AbilityOne[®] Program for the Federal government - one of the largest sources of employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. SourceAmerica took a leadership role in assisting nonprofit agencies to phase out and eliminate the use of 14(c) certificates within the Program. In March 2019, the Board of Directors voted to invest significant resources to phase out the use of 14(c) certificates by SourceAmerica nonprofit agencies on AbilityOne contracts. We launched a 14(c) Transition Program to provide technical and financial resources to achieve this objective. The U.S. AbilityOne Commission[®] subsequently issued a final rule that prohibited payment of subminimum wages on

contracts within the AbilityOne Program, effective October 19, 2022. No 14(c) certificates are now being used in the Program, and all AbilityOne employees are now paid at least minimum wage.

Our 14(c) Transition Program demonstrated that, with the right package of tools and resources, most employees who transitioned off 14(c) certificates remained employed. This includes providing key technical assistance to help employers transition away from paying subminimum wages, as well as a competitive grant program for states to provide assistance for individuals to transition from 14(c). We believe TCIEA provides the resources necessary to ensure people with disabilities can successfully transition off of 14(c) certificates.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to join other leaders in the disability employment rights community in advocating for a new era of competitive and integrated employment for all.

Sincerely,



Ricardo Terrazas
Vice President, Government Affairs
SourceAmerica