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## REAUTHORIZATION OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT (WIA) AND THE REHABILITATION ACT

- **Support bills in the Senate and the House to reauthorize WIA and the Rehabilitation Act that facilitate access and expanded employment opportunities for people with disabilities and enhance the role of community rehabilitation programs in providing necessary services and supports.**
- **Oppose efforts to consolidate critical programs for people with disabilities.**

After nine years, Congress has still not passed a bill reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), including Title IV of WIA which amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. We believe that any reauthorization of WIA should modernize federal efforts to assist people with disabilities in finding and retaining employment by ensuring that one-stop career centers provide physical and programmatic accessibility. Supporting individuals with disabilities is a core purpose of WIA. We also believe that the Rehabilitation Act should be reauthorized to expand and improve the role of community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in offering vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities to enhance their employment opportunities. Of particular focus should be improving how VR agencies address the transition of students with disabilities from high school to postsecondary education and into the workforce.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, individuals with disabilities are twice as likely to drop out of high school as those without disabilities, exacerbating their challenges in finding steady employment. In addition, these students are far less likely to attend college than their peers without disabilities. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that the unemployment rate for adults 16 to 64 years old with disabilities is almost 13 percent for those that are in the workforce. The number of working age individuals with disabilities not in the workforce is a staggering 67.8 percent.

The chair and ranking member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions are working on a bipartisan reauthorization bill. However, to date the HELP Committee has not scheduled a markup. In June, the House Committee on Education and the Workforce marked up a substitute amendment to H.R. 4297, which would consolidate and eliminate several key programs under the Rehabilitation Act (e.g., supported employment state grant and Projects with Industry).

While considering legislation to improve workforce opportunities for people with disabilities, please preserve and enhance the role of CRPs in meeting the unique needs of individuals with disabilities, and retain critical programs such as:

- **Supported Employment State Grant Program** authorizing grants assisting states in developing and providing supported employment services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- **Projects with Industry** to create and expand career opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the competitive labor market.

### CONTACT

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