



February 23, 2023

Senator Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Steve Daines
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Casey and Senator Daines:

On behalf of the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE), the only national organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities, I am writing to express our support for the Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act (TCIEA). This proposed legislation will have a direct and positive impact on the financial security of the people we serve.

The proposed bill will result in a thoughtful **phasing out of subminimum wage**, which remains a legacy of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA, 1938). APSE has been advocating for this since 2009, and this policy priority was reaffirmed by our National Board of Directors in 2019 (see APSE's Call to Phase out 14(c) and Subminimum Wage, <https://apse.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/APSE-14c-Documents-4-17-19-Full-Version.pdf>).

To date, 13 states have eliminated the use of 14(c) certificates and payment of subminimum wages for people with disabilities. If passed, the TCIEA will end this practice Federally, ensuring that ALL workers with disabilities have the right to earn at least the Federal minimum wage just like workers without disabilities. This is a necessary step in achieving the full intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which aims to advance economic self-sufficiency and ensure basic civil rights for people with disabilities. Furthermore, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 established competitive, integrated employment as a priority, ensuring that people with disabilities work in mainstream jobs alongside, and are paid comparable wages to co-workers without disabilities.

As an organization that cares deeply about the overall health and well-being of people with disabilities, this bill will allow states to develop the capacity and receive the supports necessary to successfully transition business models and programs to CIE for people with disabilities. We urge Congress to continue to work in a bipartisan manner to address the economic disparities and unnecessary segregation of people with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, that is sustained through continued utilization of the subminimum wage. APSE stands ready to assist in whatever manner is helpful.

Sincerely,

Julie J. Christensen, MSW, PhD
Executive Director, Director of Policy & Advocacy