



SENT VIA EMAIL

January 25, 2019

The Honorable Robert Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

The National Federation of the Blind strongly endorses the Transformation to Competitive Employment Act. This bill systematically phases out Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) over a six-year period, and ultimately sunsets this provision. We thank you for leading this effort and being a champion for the equal rights of people with disabilities.

As you are aware, the National Federation of the Blind has opposed Section 14(c) of the FLSA since our founding in 1940 because it codifies society's low expectations and the misconception that people with disabilities are fundamentally less capable than those without disabilities. This stigma has served as a barrier to obtaining real jobs. For decades our members have fought this issue through the courts, protests in the streets, and the halls of Congress. This bill will finally close a dark chapter in our history where we once allowed employers to pay people subminimum wages simply because they had a disability. We can now begin transitioning the nearly 230,000 people with disabilities currently paid subminimum wages and working in segregated settings into competitive integrated employment.

We stand ready to assist your efforts to end the use of subminimum wages for people with disabilities. We look forward to the passage of the Transformation to Competitive Employment Act so we can write a new chapter in American history. This will be a chapter we can be proud of, one where people with disabilities are finally able to secure mainstream jobs with equal wages, where we can work alongside coworkers without disabilities, and where we can live the lives we want.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Riccobono, President
National Federation of the Blind