



August 15, 2012

The Honorable Jack Markell
Chairman
National Governors Association
444 N. Capitol Street, Suite 267
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Governor Markell:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Employment and Training Task Force congratulate you on your recent election as Chair of the National Governors' Association (NGA) and applaud your new Chair's Initiative, *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities*.

CCD is a coalition of more than 100 national disability rights, advocacy, provider and consumer organizations representing America's 57 million people with disabilities. The CCD Employment and Training Task Force concerns itself with public policies that enhance or impede the ability of individuals with disabilities to work and seek economic self-sufficiency.

The CCD Employment and Training Task Force is delighted to learn of your new NGA Chair's Initiative, *A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities*. We applaud your leadership and would welcome the opportunity to partner with you in support of your efforts to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to work. CCD members include organizations with significant expertise in best practices in the employment of people with disabilities. Our members have affiliates in every state. Many of our members are very active in state efforts in this area, including promising new practices such as Employment First, youth transition initiatives, and public-private partnerships.

We would like to invite a member of your staff to speak at one of our upcoming meetings about the *A Better Bottom Line* initiative and how our organizations might assist the NGA in advancing this exciting project.

Additionally, we wanted to draw your attention to an immediate, serious problem confronting two invaluable federal work incentives programs for people with disabilities that are implemented at the state level. As described in the attached fact sheet from the National Disability Rights Network [NDRN], the Congressional authorization for the Work Incentives Planning Assistance (WIPA) program expired on June 30, 2012 and that for the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) program expires September 30, 2012. Although legislation to reauthorize these programs has been introduced, Congress has not yet acted. Several state vocational rehabilitation agencies, including that of your own state of Delaware, have stepped up to continue supporting local providers of the WIPA programs. We realize that most states face severe budget constraints and we appreciate the need for state and local

administrative flexibility both within and across states. However, we ask that the NGA encourage its member Governors to explore ways to sustain the WIPA programs in their jurisdiction until such time as funding for this program is restored.

In closing, congratulations on your recent election as NGA Chair, and thank you for making the employment of people with disabilities your Chair's Initiative. The CCD Employment and Training Task Force looks forward to working with you in support of this effort. To arrange a time to meet with us, your staff may contact any of the co-chairs as identified below.

Thank you for your attention to our request.

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Co-signed

ACCSES
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation
Easter Seals
Goodwill Industries International, Inc.
Institute for Educational Leadership
International Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation
Learning Disabilities Association of America
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities
National Rehabilitation Association
NISH
National Council on Independent Living
National Down Syndrome Congress
Paralyzed Veterans of America
The Arc of the United States
United Spinal Association