



June 10, 2015

The Honorable Senator Grassley  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Grassley,

I am writing on behalf of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) to express our support and encouragement to move forward with passage of the Transition to Independence Act. ANCOR is a national trade association representing more than 800 private providers of community living and employment supports and services to more than 400,000 individuals with disabilities. Our prime goal is to be the indispensable leader, resource and advocate for a diverse private disability services network that ensures full citizenship and engaged community participation for people with disabilities of all ages.

This year ANCOR is celebrating 45 years of providing quality community services to individuals with disabilities around the country that enable them to live full, productive lives. The Transition to Independence Act is the next step in ensuring that millions of Americans with disabilities have access to integrated employment options and the opportunities to live and work as equals among their peers. ANCOR strongly believes that the incentives-based approach of the proposed legislation will be effective in ensuring that states are achieving its benchmarks and expectations.

While ANCOR is supportive of the bill as whole, there are a few specific sections of the Transition to Independence Act that are particularly important to us. Specifically, we appreciate the bill's aim to encourage states to increase Medicaid payments for supported employment providers by an amount necessary to ensure an adequately supported employment network. As ANCOR members continue to create innovative solutions to integrated employment, they also face budget shortfalls and workforce deficits of the workers that provide essential direct support services for individuals with disabilities. The bill's recognition of this tremendous challenge and its efforts to address it match the goals and priorities for our organization. Further, we fully support the additional benchmark of encouraging interagency collaboration between state agencies responsible for Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation and education. We believe improved collaboration both at the national and state level is essential in order for integrated employment to be effected. We also applaud the benchmark for demonstrations to develop a state equivalent of the requirements of Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act with a utilization goal of 7 percent of the state workforce. The benchmark recognizes the challenge of placement deficits that many providers encounter in transitioning individuals with disabilities into integrated settings.

We appreciate the remarkable value and potential of including a stakeholder advisory committee composed of both individuals with disabilities and provider perspectives. This component of the bill illustrates your deep understanding of disability inclusion and also the benefits of applying direct experience to practice. Similarly, we appreciate the bill's attention to tracking data and sharing this data amongst state participants to ensure that changes and modifications to the program are reflective of real failures and successes.

As an organization that is committed to innovative solutions to alarming unemployment rates of people with disabilities, ANCOR is proud to support the Transition to Independence Act alongside its Iowa members including the Christian Opportunity Center, Hope Haven, Opportunity Village, Hills & Dales, New Hope Village and Exceptional Persons Incorporated. The bill is a thoughtful, smart approach to an urgent situation that we cannot afford to overlook. Please let us know how we can assist in the bill's passage.

Sincerely,

Esmé Grant Grewal, Esq.  
Senior Director of Government Relations  
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)  
1101 King St., Suite 380 - Alexandria, VA 22314-2944  
Phone: (703) 535-7850, ext. 105 FAX: (703) 535-7860  
Email: [egrant@ancor.org](mailto:egrant@ancor.org)