



August 25, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Employment Task Force, we are writing to urge that people with disabilities be a specific priority in the jobs plan you are preparing for release in early September. CCD is a coalition of over 100 national disability rights, advocacy and provider organizations that advocates on behalf of the 54 million people with disabilities and their families.

Bureau of Labor Statistics data paint an ongoing grim portrait of workforce participation by people with disabilities. Statistics just released in July indicate that the workforce participation rate for people with disabilities remained virtually unchanged from 2010 to 2011 at roughly 21 percent. For those with no disability, the rate was 70 percent. During that same period, the unemployment rate for persons with a disability rose from 16.4 percent to 16.8 percent while that for people without disabilities showed a slight decline – from 9.5 to 9.0 percent. At every level of education, persons with a disability were much less likely to be employed than were their counterparts with no disability.

We applaud your intent to put forward a plan to get Americans back to work and to address this nation's long term structural unemployment challenges. However, your program will simply be inadequate if it fails to include people with disabilities in its solutions.

Cheryl Bates-Harris,
National Disability Rights Network
Co-chair

Alicia Epstein, NISH
Co-chair

Susan Goodman, APSE
And National Down Syndrome
Congress
Co-chair

Charlie Harles,
International Association of Business,
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Susan Prokop,
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Paul Seifert,
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