AUCD Statement on the Introduction of the Raise the Wage Act

WASHINGTON, DC (May 25, 2017) – The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) applauds the introduction of the Raise the Wage Act today. This bill will raise the minimum wage incrementally to reach fifteen dollars an hour by 2024. In our prosperous country, no one should have to work full-time and live in poverty. This policy change will help build our economy and help everyone, including people with disabilities, become self-sufficient, tax-paying citizens.

AUCD is especially pleased with Section 6 of the bill that phases out the use of subminimum wage certificates for workers with disabilities. Specifically, the bill allows for a transition period of six years before eliminating section 14 (c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 214 (c)(1)). The use of the subminimum wage has been too often overused, improperly used, and abused over the many years of use. This provision has trapped too many people with disabilities in poverty and often in segregated settings with no way out.

AUCD further urges Congress to pass legislation that helps to build systemic capacity to increase competitive, integrated employment for people with developmental and other disabilities to ensure that individuals who are currently working in subminimum wage jobs will be successfully transitioned to jobs with fair wages. The Advisory Committee on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment for Individuals with Disabilities established under by Section 461 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) provides substantive recommendations on ways to increase employment participation of individuals with disabilities. AUCD hopes that this Congress will work to implement the committee’s recommendations in addition to passing the Raise the Wage Act.

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), located in Silver Spring, MD, promotes and supports a national network of interdisciplinary centers on disabilities. The members of AUCD represent every U.S. state and territory. AUCD and its members work to advance policy and practice through research, education, leadership, and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. For more information, visit AUCD’s website, www.aucd.org.