

AUCD Supports President's State of the Union Agenda of Equality and Opportunity for All Americans

SILVER SPRING, MD (January 28, 2014) — The Association of University Centers on Disabilities strongly supports the agenda of equality and opportunity that the President laid out in the State of the Union address last night. While the President did not mention people with disabilities specifically, his agenda includes policies that the disability community has long championed and we believe that when he says everyone he means everyone.

Children with disabilities have the most to gain from the early childhood education that the President proposed. We wholeheartedly agreed with the President when he said "Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education." Children with disabilities are part of our national investment in our children. An abundance of research shows that when children with disabilities receive high quality early intervention they have greater success in school, work, and life.

Adults with disabilities are among those most deeply affected by unemployment and income inequality that the President promised to fight. The unemployment rate for adults with disabilities is 11.9% and only 18.7% of adults with disabilities participate in the labor force. We wholeheartedly agree that "the best measure of opportunity is access to a good job" and that "even in the midst of recovery, too many Americans are working more than ever just to get by; let alone to get ahead. And too many still aren't working at all."

We support the president in his efforts to improve job training programs, that "in this rapidly-changing economy, we have to make sure that every American has the skills to fill those jobs." We hope that youth with disabilities are included in the apprenticeships, on-the-job training, and community college programs that he called on Vice President Biden to lead. Our economy cannot afford to leave behind workers with disabilities.

All people with disabilities deserve access to high quality affordable health care – something too often denied to them before the Affordable Care Act reforms. The President highlighted this key achievement

of the ACA when he said, “Because of this law, no American, none, zero, can ever again be dropped or denied coverage for a pre-existing condition like asthma or back pain or cancer.”

Finally, people with disabilities are the best example of why “here in America, our success should depend not on accident of birth but the strength of our work ethic and the scope of our dreams.”

We look forward to working with the White House to advance this agenda of equality and opportunity for all Americans.

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.

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