



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES
RESEARCH. EDUCATION. SERVICE

Senator Tom Harkin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

January 9, 2014

Dear Senator Harkin,

On behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, I write to express our strong opposition to proposals to eliminate or reduce Social Security Disability Insurance (DI) benefits for individuals who concurrently receive Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits as a partial offset for extending the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) program.

The DI and UI programs have been established for different purposes and largely serve different populations. Less than one percent of individuals served by the DI and UI programs receive concurrent benefits. At the same time, receiving UI and DI is not inconsistent. This has been the long-standing position of the Social Security Administration and of the courts. Individuals who do receive concurrent benefits do so because they have significant disabilities that make them eligible for DI, and because they have also attempted to work at a low level of earnings but have lost their job through no fault of their own. According to the GAO, the average quarterly concurrent benefit in fiscal year 2010 was about \$1,100 in DI and \$2,200 in UI for a quarterly average of about \$3,300 in total benefits.

While AUCD supports the bill to extend unemployment benefits (S. 1859), an amendment to reduce DI benefits for people with disabilities would be completely discriminatory. People with disabilities can and do work and pay payroll taxes just like everyone else. Therefore, they should not be denied unemployment insurance if they, like anyone else, are in the unfortunate circumstance of getting laid off or losing a job.

Thank you for your ongoing leadership on this and many other issues facing Americans with disabilities.

Sincerely,

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