



ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES
THE LEADERSHIP, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY & RESEARCH NETWORK

May 24, 2021

Senator Wyden
Senator Cassidy
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Reed
Representative Larson
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Senators Wyden and Cassidy, and Representatives Reed and Larson,

I am writing to strongly support the Work Without Worry Act. AUCD supports and promotes a national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs with the mission to advance policies and practices that improve the health, education, and social and economic well-being of all people with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and their communities by supporting our members in research, education, health, and service activities that achieve our vision. We believe the bill, if passed, will make important changes allowing adults whose lifelong disabilities were identified in childhood greater access to work force participation.

In recent years, the systemic issues related to antiquated systems of access to benefits have become a heightened concern as this generation of youth and young adults with disabilities seeks full participation in community living and the world of work. Youth with disabilities already face many barriers to gaining work experiences. The severity of their health conditions, family poverty, and confusion about work-related SSI rules and policies create challenges that can limit the opportunities of these youth when transitioning from school to adulthood (Wittenburg & Loprest, 2007).

AUCD acted as the Technical Assistance Center for the 5-year joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Education, Social Security Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Labor known as PROMISE: Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income. The purpose of PROMISE was to promote positive changes for SSI youth, 14-16 years of age, and their families, particularly in transition and employment including maximizing the use of existing state and federal resources. But to be able to do that, students and families need accurate information and access to social security benefits, work incentives, and community services and not to feel that their social security benefits and eligibility were threatened. This bill will continue to provide that information and access in appropriate situations to those eligible under the Disabled Adult Child benefit (DAC).

AUCD strongly supports the Work Without Worry Act as one way to further encourage employment among youth with significant disabilities without threatening their, or their families', future financial viability. We look forward to working in support of its passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'R. Rodgers', is located in the top left corner of the page.

Rylin Rodgers
Policy Director
AUCD