

# Work Matters

A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

AND

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES



**House Bill 2965 and**  
***Work Matters: A Framework for States***  
***on Workforce Development for People***  
***with Disabilities***

TESTIMONY BY:

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# House Bill 2965

- Thanks for the opportunity to testify regarding House Bill 2965
- The bill establishes *The Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities*

## House Bill 2965 (cont.)

### The responsibilities of the Task Force include:

- Reviewing the Report *Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities*;
- Evaluating Oregon's disability-related employment programs; and
- Reporting findings and making recommendations to the appropriate committees of the legislature

# Background Regarding Employment of People with Disabilities

- People with disabilities are a key factor in states' ability to build strong, inclusive workforces that translate into economic success
- **Employment** addresses two challenges at one time: cost-effective means to empower individuals with disabilities and strengthens the workforce
  - High unemployment rate of people with disabilities
  - Disproportionate rates of poverty and economic insecurity

## Background (cont.)

- State policymakers adopting multi-faceted approaches to enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities
- Moving the needle on this critical workforce issue will require strong leadership by state policymakers

# About CSG: The Council of State Governments

<http://www.CSG.org/NTPWD/WorkMatters.aspx>

- Nation's only non-partisan, not-for-profit organization serving all three branches of state government
- Region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy
- Offers unparalleled regional, national and international opportunities to network, develop leaders, collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships
- Boasts nationally recognized experience as an impartial convener of state officials, a provider of training and technical assistance, and a primary source of educational policy information

# About NCSL: The National Conference of State Legislatures

<http://www.NCSL.org/Research/Labor-and-Employment/Disability-Employment.aspx>

- Nation's preeminent bipartisan organization representing and serving the legislators and legislative staff of all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories
- Provides its constituents research and information services on hundreds of legislative policy issues, technical assistance and extensive professional development opportunities
- Has staff expertise available to support state research support and technical assistance requests on disabilities employment policy issues
- Maintains a disabilities employment online resource portal housing *Work Matters* materials, related policy research documents and tools



# About SEED: The State Exchange on Employment & Disability

- Goal is to foster a nationwide workforce more inclusive of people with disabilities
- Expands capacity of state intermediary organizations (CSG, NCSL) to offer disability employment policy and subject-matter expertise
- Readies state intermediaries to respond to inquiries and requests on disability employment and workforce development issues
- Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

# National Task Force on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities

- Convened by CSG in partnership with NCSL
- Implemented under the auspices of the DOL/ODEP's SEED initiative
- Goal was to explore key issues around the employment of people with disabilities, identify key themes, and provide recommendations for states
- Results served as the foundation for a disability employment policy framework for the states

## National Task Force (cont.)

- Co-chaired by:
  - CSG President Governor Jack Markell (DE)
  - CSG Chair, State Senator Beau McCoy (NE)
- Oversaw work of four subcommittees, each composed of:
  - 10-12 state policymakers
  - 4-6 non-voting private-sector stakeholders and experts

# National Task Force (cont.)

## Four Subcommittees:

1. Career Readiness & Employability
2. Hiring, Retention, & Reentry
3. Entrepreneurship, Tax Incentives, & Procurement
4. Transportation, Technology, & Other Employment Supports

# Policy Framework

## Guiding principles:

- Leading by example
- Adopting robust reporting requirements—  
“what gets measured gets done”
- Increasing coordination and collaboration
- Including universal design
- Extending diversity and inclusion initiatives to include disability

# Policy Framework

## Overarching themes:

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience
- Four goals of disability policy—equal opportunity, full participation, economic self-sufficiency, and independent living
- Disability can develop at any time
- “Nothing about us without us”
- People with disabilities under-utilized in workforce and experience social and economic disadvantage
- Disability inclusion boosts bottom line

# Policy Framework

**Policy options categorized under five areas or topics:**

- Laying the Groundwork
- Preparing for Work
- Getting to & Accessing Work Opportunities
- Staying at Work
- Supporting Self-Employment & Entrepreneurship

# Laying the Groundwork

- States as Model Employers
- Capacity of Private and Nonprofit Sector
- External and Internal Focus on Disability Awareness
- Interagency Coordination and Collaboration



# Preparing for Work

- Education and Career Readiness
- Skill Development and Job Exploration
- Family Engagement

# Getting To & Accessing Work Opportunities

- Transportation
- Information and Communication Technology
- Built Environment

# Staying-at-Work

- Stay-at-Work (SAW) Programs
- Return-to-Work (RTW) Programs
- Navigate the Complexities of Benefits and Work Incentives
- Supplement Existing Financial Incentive

# Self Employment & Entrepreneurship

- State Workforce Development Systems
- Possible Career Strategies
- State Procurement, Certifications, and Financial Incentives for Disability-Owned Businesses

# Conclusion

**House Bill 2965** provides the mechanism to:

- Review innovative disability-related employment programs and policies adopted by other states;
- Compare and contrast these programs and policies to Oregon's programs and policies; and
- Report findings and recommendations that work for the state of Oregon and its residents with disabilities

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