



October 12, 2023

The Honorable Bob Casey
393 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey,

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) empowers individuals with Down syndrome and their families by driving policy change, providing resources, engaging with local communities, and shifting public perceptions. We write to express our strong support for the Disability Employment Incentive Act which will enhance existing tax credits, incentivize employers to hire and retain employees with disabilities, and make workplaces more accessible.

Despite the majority of individuals with disabilities wanting to work, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities is more than double that of their nondisabled peers.¹ There are many barriers for individuals with disabilities to obtain and retain employment such as inadequate pre-employment training and support, physically and digitally inaccessible workplaces, and limited opportunities for long-term employment. Employers also face barriers such as being disconnected from disability employment hiring pools and programs, including those provided through state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies, and the costs incurred to make workplaces accessible to employees with disabilities. Additional support and education are needed to diminish and remove these barriers for employees and employers alike.

A 2023 report from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) found employers want to provide accommodations to retain valued and qualified employees. Most accommodations are a one-time expenditure of less than \$300, with nearly 50 percent costing nothing at all. Expanding tax credits will address and alleviate the burden of the 7.2 percent of accommodations that require the employer to bear continuing costs to provide. This will in turn allow businesses to promote and create welcoming, accessible, and inclusive work environments for people with disabilities.²

NDSS strives to ensure all individuals with Down syndrome are assured their human rights and valued by a more inclusive society. We urge Congress to do the same by establishing accessible workplaces and increasing tax credits as a mechanism to motivate employers to employ individuals with disabilities. The passage of the Disability Employment Incentive Act would support individuals with disabilities in their pursuit of finding lasting and meaningful employment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kandi Pickard".

Kandi Pickard
President and CEO
National Down Syndrome Society

¹ "3 Reasons Why Hiring People with Disabilities Is Good for Your Business." Galt Foundation, 5 June 2023, galtfoundation.org/2023/02/14/3-reasons-why-hiring-people-with-disabilities-is-good-for-your-business/#:~:text=Employees%20with%20disabilities%20tend%20to,retention%20rates%20and%20lower%20turnover.

² Job Accommodation Network (JAN). Costs and Benefits of Accommodation. Accommodation and Compliance: Low Cost, High Impact [Internet]. Updated May 4, 2023. Accessed July 15, 2023.