Date

The Honorable Gavin Newsom

California State Capitol

1303 10th Street, Suite 1173

Sacramento, California 95814

**RE: Recommendations for the Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery on the Topic of the Employment of People with Disabilities**

Dear Governor Newsom:

[The Employment First Committee](https://scdd.ca.gov/employment_first_committee/) (EFC)[[1]](#footnote-1) is a statutorily created Committee responsible for ensuring that Californians with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities can obtain and retain employment in the community. The EFC writes today with four recommendations for the Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery to consider as it shapes its agenda to address the economic recovery from COVID-19.

The State of California should:

* Become a national leader in employment by implementing policies and practices that guarantee equitable access, opportunity and inclusion for people with disabilities.
* Ensure that people with and without disabilities achieve equal participation in the labor force.
* Support California businesses in their efforts to employ people with disabilities.
* Add additional Taskforce members from the business community with expertise in development, recruitment, hiring and retention with people with disabilities.

People with disabilities bring valuable skills to the workforce and are a part of all diverse economic and social sectors. Nevertheless in 2019, the labor force participation rate of working-aged people with disabilities was 19.3 percent compared to 66.3 percent of working-aged people without disabilities.[[2]](#footnote-2) This statistic collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the need to ensure that people with disabilities are fully accounted for and included in all conversations focused on creating a fair and equitable recovery. Therefore, we encourage the Taskforce to seize this opportunity to lead the way to equitable access and inclusion of people with disabilities in the labor force.

Thank you for considering our initial recommendations to the Task Force. The EFC is committed to supporting your work and is happy to provide additional expertise or resources that would be helpful to the Task Force. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Deputy Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Cindy Smith at 916-799-8805 or cindy.smith@scdd.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Wesley Witherspoon, Chair, Employment First Committee

1. In 2013, California adopted its Employment First Policy (AB 1041 (Chesbro) Chapter 677, Statutes of 2013), which states “it is the policy of the state that opportunities for integrated, competitive employment, including, self-employment, and microenterprises, shall be given the highest priority for working age individuals with developmental disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.nr0.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)