

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

Executive Director Report

January 24, 2024

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We must challenge the status quo and dismantle barriers that prevent individuals with disabilities from thriving

Ed Roberts (Ed Roberts Day January 23, 2024)

Overview

- 2024 Report on Phasing Out Subminimum Wage
- Assembly Select Committee on Opportunities and Barriers for People with Disabilities in the Workplace
- Advocacy on U.S. Census
- Other highlights
 - Statewide Self Determination Advisory Committee
 - Legislative and Policy Committee

2024 Report on Phasing Out Subminimum Wage

Context

- Federal and state law passed in the late 1930's allowed employers to pay many persons with disabilities less than the minimum pay wage (subminimum) and subjected them to segregated work settings.
- Senate Bill (SB) 639 (Durazo, 2021) ended the use of special wage licenses for employment at less than minimum wage.
- State agencies must work together to provide employment services, and transition more than four thousand people (Jan 2023) with I/DD still employed through subminimum wage programs into minimum wage-or-above paying jobs (i.e., competitive integrated employment).

2024 Report on Phasing Out Subminimum Wage

Highlights of the findings from the January 2024 report:

- 1. The transition of 4,000 individuals out of 14c subminimum wage programs is happening and is on time. Approximately 2,000 individuals have left the 14c subminimum wage program since the enactment of SB 639 and are moving onto either competitive integrated employment or their choice for a meaningful day.
- 2. It is anticipated that the transition will be complete by the January 1, 2025 deadline
- 3. Data integrity has been a core indicator for implementation; the departments have faced significant challenges in collecting and sharing data
- 4. Subsequent reports will include more substantive information relating to the employment status of individuals

Assembly Select Committee on Opportunities and Barriers for People with Disabilities in the Workplace

- Purpose of the hearing was to explore contributing factors to the low employment rate among people with disabilities and the challenges they face when employed
- I was called to share how the state can improve policy to connect more people with disabilities to meaningful employment. Provided data that showed people with I/DD have a lower employment rate compared to PWD
- Recommended funding DB 101 <https://ca.db101.org/> \$200k
 - California established “DB 101” (disability benefits counseling)
 - Effective at dispelling myths about losing benefits
 - In recent years it has been funded on a piecemeal basis with NO FUNDING for 2024

Advocacy on U.S. Census

- An accurate census count is vital for a fair and just democracy
- For decades, the census has historically undercounted several groups, including people with disabilities.
- This undercounting then leads to less resources for services, and if left uncorrected lessens the ability for people with a disability to become independent, productive members of their community.
- Current proposal the Census Bureau is considering would change from the current disability questions used in the American Community Survey (ACS) to the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS) of questions.
 - change could lead to an undercounting of people with disabilities by as much as 40%.

Other Highlights

- Statewide Self Determination Advisory Committee
 - Townhall on FMS
- Legislative and Policy Committee
 - CA Dental Assn partnership \$50M for specialty dental clinics

THANK YOU!

Questions or
Discussion?