



Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities since 1975

May 24, 2018

The Honorable Betsy DeVos
Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

TASH is an international leader in disability advocacy. Our national network is dedicated to ensuring inclusive practices that provide maximum opportunity for independence, equitable employment, and community inclusion. We are steadfast in our belief that employment at or above minimum wage is a right and a critical need in the pursuit of full inclusion for people with disabilities.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, a bipartisan statute that made clear that competitive integrated employment is a national priority for people with disabilities, is a critical step in the advancement of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. We are deeply concerned with the recent notification from the Secretary of Education, to the public, on her intent to amend the regulatory definitions in the implementing regulations.

The national TASH network **strongly opposes** reopening the regulations. **A clear, uncompromised definition of competitive integrated employment is central to achieving the vision of individuals with disabilities as full members of society, and has already been embedded in WIOA, CMS regulations, and state employment first policy.** The disability community has worked tirelessly to propose solutions and come to consensus on strategies to implement this critical piece of legislation. The work ahead is to build and move forward on full implementation of WIOA not take unnecessary steps backward.

We believe that WIOA and its existing regulations lay a solid framework for the achievement of economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities across this country. **We ask the Department of Education to reconsider its decision** and move forward on implementing the vast amount of proactive, consensus driven strategies provided by the disability community.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ruthie-Marie Beckwith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruthie-Marie Beckwith, PhD
Executive Director

1875 Eye Street NW, Suite 582 ♦ Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-429-2080 ♦ Fax: 202-540-9019 ♦ Email: info@tash.org ♦ Website: www.tash.org