

Disability Employment Policy & Advocacy

Background

“You [the business community] have in your hands the key to the success of this act, for you can unlock a splendid resource of untapped human potential that, when freed, will enrich us all.”

– President George H. W. Bush, Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - July 26, 1990¹

In this historic address, President Bush highlighted the important role the business community plays in making the workplace more accessible for people with disabilities. While the ADA and other landmark pieces of legislation have advanced inclusion for people with disabilities in the workplace, further efforts are needed to make it inclusive for all. The CEO Commission for Disability Employment is committed to pursuing policy solutions that build on the successes of the ADA. Specifically, these include two pillars: workforce development and workplace equity.

Importance of Public Policy:



While it is a challenge to legislate cultural changes or shifts in societal expectations, legislation like the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 have made a real difference in how people with disabilities are treated in the workplace. One of the main components of the ADA bans discrimination against people based on their disability. According to a survey that assessed employment discrimination before and after the ADA, there was a **21.6%** decrease in people with disabilities who reported having experienced this type of discrimination between 1986 and 2004.² It is clear that public policy serves a critical role in creating a framework in which businesses can tap into this valuable talent pool.

Role of the Business Community:

When the business community interacts with the public policy process, it normally does so for one of two main reasons: advancing business interests or generating large-scale societal benefits.³ Disability employment transcends both of those areas as employers gain access to valuable talent and generate positive systematic change. Businesses can be leaders on this issue, especially when working together across industries, company sizes and geographic locations.⁴



Need for Action:



CEO Commission members use their voices to advance policies that increase disability employment outcomes. A recent report from the Department of Labor shared that people with disabilities continue to access the workforce at around a third the rate of their peers without disabilities.⁵ These voices are important now more than ever as the economy and labor market recovers from COVID-19. Join the CEO Commission as we continue to advocate for policy solutions that make employment accessible to people with disabilities.

The CEO Commission for Disability Employment is committed to increasing awareness of the cost-effectiveness and value of reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

[Click here for more information](#)



¹Remarks of President George H. W. Bush at the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act." ADA.gov. U.S. Department of Justice, n.d. https://www.ada.gov/qhw_bush_ada_remarks.html

²Rep. The Impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act: Assessing the Progress Toward Achieving the Goals of the ADA. National Council on Disability, July 26, 2007. <https://www.aucd.org/docs/ADA%20Impact%20Report.pdf>

³Heineman, Ben W. "Corporations Need a Better Approach to Public Policy." Harvard Business Review, April 1, 2016. <https://hbr.org/2016/04/corporations-need-a-better-approach-to-public-policy>

⁴Smith, Katherine V. "A Strategic Approach to Public Policy Engagement." Carroll School of Management. Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, July 3, 2018. <https://ccc.bc.edu/content/ccc/blog-home/2018/07/responsible-corporate-leadership-strategic-approach-public-policy-engagement.html>

⁵Rep. Employment for Persons with a Disability: Analysis of Trends During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Office of Disability Employment Policy, November 2020. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/evaluation/pdf/ODEP_Employment-for-PWD-AnalysisofTrendsDuringCOVID_Feb-Sept.pdf

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