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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. schedule	Schedule for the President re: phone number (partial) (1 page)	12/17/1999	P6/b(6)
002. email	Jonathan Young to Devorah Adler re: phone number (partial) (1 page)	12/14/1999	P6/b(6)
003. list	re: People Not on the Invitation List (2 pages)	n.d.	P6/b(6)
004. email	Jonathan Young to Devorah Adler et al. re: Contact in Northern Virginia (partial) (1 page)	12/14/1999	P6/b(6)
005. list	re: people for round table (1 page)	n.d.	P6/b(6)
006. letter	Becky Ogle to Chris (partial) (1 page)	12/13/1999	P6/b(6)
007. schedule	Schedule for the President re: phone number (partial) (1 page)	12/17/1999	P6/b(6)
008. letter	re: People Not on the Invitation List (1 page)	n.d.	P6/b(6)
009. email	Lee to Karin Kullman re: personal medical (1 page)	12/14/1999	P6/b(6)
010. article	re: phone numbers (partial) (10 pages)	ca. 1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

Jeffords - Kennedy

2012-0463-S
rc773

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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[001]

SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1999

Draft Schedule

SCHEDULING DIRECTOR:	STEPHANIE STREETT	
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PRESS DESK:	KAREN BURCHARD	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	202-456-7193
	WHCA PAGER:	4769
EVENT COORDINATOR:	JULIE EDDY	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	202-456-5330
	WHCA PAGER:	4560
EVENT COORDINATOR:	TIMOTHY EMRICH	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	202-456-5306
	WHCA PAGER:	4161
WEATHER:	WASHINGTON, D.C.	

Vetting - Gehrke

SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1999
Draft Schedule

at the most 20 for press

9:00 9:15	am- am	**BRIEFING** OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Mary Beth Cahill, Bruce Reed
9:20	am	**THE PRESIDENT** departs The White House via motorcade en route Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial [drive time: 5 minutes]
9:25	am	**THE PRESIDENT** arrives Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
9:30 10:15	am- am	**JEFFORDS/KENNEDY BILL SIGNING** FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL (MELLON AUDITORIUM - RAIN SITE) Remarks: Staff Contact: Mary Beth Cahill, Bruce Reed Event Coordinator: Laura Graham **OPEN PRESS**

greeting is the Roosevelt family

need to walk thru crowd to get to stage.

8^{30} CALL TIME
8^{45} VIPs
3 disabled op @ signing
most 10 members
IGA - 5
Leg - 50
OPL - 220
Cabinet - 30

Wide shot FDR in chair

Note: **There will be approximately tbd guests in attendance.**

-- Off-stage announcement of Secretary Donna Shalala, Secretary Alexis Herman, and Administrator Kenneth Apfel.

-- Off-stage announcement of **the President**, accompanied by Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator James Jeffords, and Real Person TBD.

-- Senator Edward Kennedy makes brief remarks and introduces Senator James Jeffords.

-- Senator James Jeffords makes brief remarks and introduces Real Person TBD.

-- Person TBD makes brief remarks and introduces **the President.**

-- **The President** makes remarks and invites Members of Congress to stage for the legislation signing.

-- **The President** works a ropeline and departs.

Friday, December 17, 1999

10:40 11:00	am- am	**BRIEFING** OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Samuel Berger
11:00 12:30	am- pm	**US-EU SUMMIT** LOCATION TBD Staff Contact: Samuel Berger
12:30 1:30	pm- pm	**PHONE AND OFFICE TIME** OVAL OFFICE
1:30 3:00	pm- pm	**HOLD FOR BRIEFING AND DGA STRATEGY SESSION** LOCATION TBD AND YELLOW OVAL ROOM Staff Contact: Capricia Marshall, Minyon Moore Event Coordinator: Laura Schwartz **CLOSED PRESS** **Note: There will be approximately tbd guests in attendance.**
3:30 3:40	pm- pm	**MEETING** OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Stephanie Streett
3:45 4:45	pm- pm	**BUDGET MEETING** CABINET ROOM Staff Contact: Gene Sperling, Jack Lew
4:45 5:45	pm- pm	**PHONE AND OFFICE TIME** RESIDENCE/OVAL OFFICE DINING ROOM
5:45 6:00	pm- pm	**BRIEFING** OVAL OFFICE DINING ROOM Staff Contact: Joe Lockhart
6:00 6:30	pm- pm	**INTERVIEW WITH KATIE COURIC** OVAL OFFICE Staff Contact: Joe Lockhart
6:45	pm	**THE PRESIDENT** departs The White House via motorcade en route Private Residence [drive time: tbd]

7:00 pm **THE PRESIDENT** arrives Private Residence

Greeters: Terry McAuliffe
Dorothy McAuliffe

7:05 pm-
7:25 pm **PHOTO RECEIVING LINE**
ROOM TBD
Private Residence
Staff Contact: Minyon Moore
Event Coordinator:
CLOSED PRESS

Note: There will be approximately 80 guests in attendance.

7:30 pm-
8:25 pm **DCCC DINNER**
ROOM TBD
Private Residence
Staff Contact: Minyon Moore
Event Coordinator:
PRESS TBD

Note: There will be approximately 80 guests in attendance.

-- **The President** proceeds to seat.

-- Dinner is served.

-- Terry McAuliffe makes brief welcoming remarks and introduces Representative Patrick Kennedy.

-- Representative Patrick Kennedy makes brief remarks and introduces Representative Richard Gephardt.

-- Representative Richard Gephardt makes brief remarks and introduces **the President.**

-- **The President** makes remarks and departs.

8:30 pm **THE PRESIDENT** departs Private Residence via motorcade en route The White House
[drive time: tbd]

8:45 pm **THE PRESIDENT** arrives The White House

BC/HRC RON **THE WHITE HOUSE**
WASHINGTON, D.C.

**PRESIDENTIAL
TASK FORCE ON
EMPLOYMENT
OF ADULTS
WITH
DISABILITIES**

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Put Ability to Work!

If Not Now, When?

The Courage to Question

Prejudicial treatment, individual and societal avoidance, segregation, isolation, poverty. Relationships built on obligation and pity. How do we change this history of treatment of people with disabilities? How do we create a different future?

The foundation for our nation's policy related to people with disabilities was solidified through enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). But do public policies, in and of themselves, create equal and meaningful opportunity for participation in all the benefits of citizenship in the United States of America?

Questions prompt discussion. They lead to examination of the status quo, which leads to more questions, deeper examination, and identification of strategies for change. When questions result in controversy, the ensuing debate is ultimately healthy for our nation if we are serious about change.

Legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the Rehabilitation Act, or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) cannot change history and does not automatically produce needed change. Instead, public policy lays a framework for action. As we look back over twenty-five years of the implementation of IDEA, and ten years after enactment of the ADA, we must recognize that the responsibility for change does not rest solely with the Federal Government. Nor does it rest solely with the Presidential Task Force, although the Task Force is charged with creating strategies and mobilizing action for change. It does not rest solely with Congress or with the Courts, although each has a critical role. It does not rest solely with Governors and other State and local leaders, although their role in implementing change is crucial. It does not rest solely on the shoulders of the media, although their power to shape, change and influence national dialogue should not be underestimated. And the responsibility does not fall solely on people with disabilities or their families. It will take all of us, working together, to create a more just and equal society for all people. All are responsible.

This year, through the exemplary leadership of President Clinton, Vice President Gore and senior members of their Administration, the beginnings of a revolutionary strategy for eliminating barriers to employment for adults with disabilities is emerging. This strategy is based on the belief that inclusion, economic independence, choice, and opportunities for meaningful participation — and careers — must be afforded to all people in our nation. It is based on the recognition that this has been denied to people with disabilities. To change this fact requires that we examine the depths of our own beliefs about people with disabilities as workers, as colleagues, as business owners. It requires that we ask the difficult questions, have the difficult debates, recognize and act on the needed change.

If Not Now, When? documents that difficult questions are being raised, debates are ensuing and strategies for change are emerging. Task Force members are proud of what has been accomplished in a short time, as reflected in this second report. Each member recognizes that eliminating barriers will require profound, systemic change, and is thinking strategically *and acting* to bring about that change.

It is clear that only a massive and sustained effort, continuing into the next century and involving all of us, will accomplish the task at hand. It requires our willingness to raise difficult and controversial questions about our priorities as a nation. It requires the courage to question, confront, challenge and change policies and practices, actions and beliefs. It requires the elimination of enormous disparities born of decades of erroneous societal thinking about, and stereotypes of, people with disabilities. It requires profound, top to bottom and side to side change. It requires thinking "outside the box" but not in isolation. And it requires working together and collaborating on a cross-disability, cross-agency, and cross-cultural basis.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force applauds your unquestionable and unwavering dedication to this mission, your willingness to lead this debate, and your determination to lead our nation into the next millennium with this critical charge.

The Urgency of Time

We must not lose the opportunity that faces us as we enter the 21st Century. Our nation is undergoing a sweeping transformation that is impacting all parts of society. The increasing diversity of our population, the impact of technology on our lives, the globalization of our economy — these and other changes are dramatically shifting the organization of our systems and how we participate as workers in our world.

This transformation is resulting in monumental change in how our Government operates. Gone are the days that Congress or the Federal Government mandates a far-reaching change without State and local cooperation and, most of all, financial resources attached. Much of public policy and its implementation is devolving to States, providing an increase in control and power to State and local government over its design and implementation. This is not bad, but it is a change — and one that must be lived with and within as we continue to fulfill the mandate of the Executive Order to bring employment of adults with disabilities as close as possible to that of the general population.

As part of this transformation our nation is experiencing the strongest economy in a generation. There are new and expanded opportunities for employment and economic prosperity as scientific and technological advances result in industries and occupations unheard of only a few decades ago. Unemployment is at an all time low. Employers across the nation are struggling daily to find qualified workers. Yet, people with disabilities remain unemployed at stunning levels.

Opportunity is on our side. We must leverage this transformation to open the door to economic independence and employment for people with disabilities. For example, The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), passed by Congress in 1998, is a salient example of fundamentally changing how we view workforce development policy in a way that is good for workers and good for business. This law codifies many of the reforms that States and local communities had already begun to enact. WIA is meant to streamline, to cut red tape, and to provide services that are truly customized. The foundation of WIA workforce reform rests on four cornerstones: choice; integration; accountability; and a local focus. The intent is that all people, including people with disabilities, are customers of this new system. The bottom line? An outcome-driven system, responsive both to employers and people seeking jobs, empowering people with information and control, and resulting in employment.

The implementation of WIA is currently underway, and all States must have their workforce system in place by July 1, 2000. It is critically important that the One-Stop Career Center system have the capacity to serve *all* of its customers. This system will be the foundation for workforce services during the early decades of the 21st Century, and

"Freedom is hammered out on the anvil of discussion, dissent, and debate."
—Hubert H. Humphrey

there is dramatic potential for increasing employment for people with disabilities as the system is put into place. But there is also great danger that patterns and practices of the past will be repeated — and that the needs of people with disabilities will be an afterthought.

The Department of Labor in consultation with other Federal partners, particularly the Rehabilitation Services Administration, has been working intensively to promulgate regulations and other policy guidance regarding workforce development and people with disabilities. President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force values your leadership in securing $20 million of the $27 million requested in the Administration's FY 2000 budget for Work Incentives Grants to foster interdisciplinary consortia and service integration at the State and local level — and thus promote coordination and integration of employment related services for people with disabilities through One-Stop Career Center Systems. The Task Force agencies and department members are eager to begin work on this critical project, and look forward to providing updates on our progress.

The foundation of choice, integration, accountability, and local focus is equally relevant to the recently passed legislation, the Ticket-To-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (WIIA) of 1999. WIIA is intended to provide increased choice and control for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries through the newly created Ticket-to-Work and Self-Sufficiency program. One-Stop Career Center Systems are identified as potential members of the eligible provider networks for SSDI and SSI beneficiaries seeking or returning to work under this program.

WIIA also allows States to offer a Medicaid "buy-in" for people receiving SSDI and SSI benefits who are starting or returning to work and, by working, would lose their health care eligibility. In addition, WIIA extends premium-free Medicare coverage for SSDI recipients who return to work for an additional four-and-a-half years beyond the three years provided under current law.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore, these are critical health care options for people with disabilities that will assist significantly in expanding employment possibilities, and your invaluable leadership to champion this legislation to passage goes without question. However, these provisions do not, in and of themselves, solve the enormous barrier to securing health care for people with disabilities seeking work. *States must elect to implement these provisions, and we must ensure that they do so.* We have a decisive and timely opportunity, *right now,* to ensure that they do so through the continued efforts of the Department of Health and Human Services to provide technical assistance and advice to States in implementing the WIIA. Equally important are the provisions within WIIA that include $150 million infrastructure grants for States, as well as the five-year, $250 million demonstration program that allows participating States to provide Medicaid-equivalent services to workers with disabilities that, without health care access, would become significant enough to qualify them for SSDI or SSI. It is imperative that these funds be made available as soon as possible to maximize implementation of WIIA across the country.

The Social Security Administration has taken the lead in coordinating with the Departments of Health and Human Services, Education and Labor and the Task Force to host a series of public forums to provide information and opportunity for discussion on the following topics: SSA customer service and work incentives initiatives; State health care systems and models; employment initiatives of the Departments of Education, Labor and Health and Human Services; and an update on the Administration's plans for implementation of WIIA. These forums are yet another example of government operating with a new focus — the customers. They are also indicative of the recognition by Task Force members that individuals with disabilities are essential partners in ensuring successful implementation of the Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act and the Workforce Investment Act.

These policy shifts and other opportunities are *forcing* us to re-organize how we do business across the nation. *The mainstream infrastructure of our communities are where the future of services and supports must rest.* People with disabilities across the nation are asking for inclusion in these mainstream services and systems, which lay the foundation for their community participation. The program and service structures of the past which categorized and separated children, young people and adults with disabilities, although with good intention, must partner with these mainstream services, and in that process refashion a new way of working for themselves.

The Opportunity to Lead

As previously outlined, our nation is undergoing dramatic shifts in how it operates as we enter the next millennium. The sweeping legislative agendas of the past *are* the past. Gone are the days that the Congress or the Federal Government mandates a far-reaching change without State and local cooperation and, most of all, financial resources attached. Big government spending days are over and fiscal responsibility and accountability are primary themes driving development and delivery of policy and services. This is not bad, but it is a change. It is a change that must be lived with and within as we continue to fulfill the mandate of the Executive Order to bring employment of adults with disabilities as close as possible to that of the general population.

Recognizing this, the Federal Government can lead the way by modeling exemplary practice in recruitment and hiring, accommodating and promoting people with the full range of disabilities. President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force commends the recent release of *Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government* by the Office of Personnel Management in October. This action plan will ensure that more people with disabilities are recruited for positions at all levels of government; provide opportunities for students with disabilities; collect and maintain data to monitor the success of people with disabilities in the Federal workforce; and provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities. The successful implementation and enforcement of *Accessing Opportunity* will provide the private sector an example to follow.

We must recognize that our existing laws prohibiting discrimination, such as the ADA and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, will be our foundation for creating change in both the public and private sector. We must leverage the existence of these laws, combined with the leadership of our Federal Government, to create change. For example, Federal contractors employ approximately 26 million people, or nearly 22 percent of the total civilian workforce. This is a critical area for leveraging the influence of the Federal Government for increasing employment and changing practices about employment of people with disabilities. More information on Section 503 compliance and best practices is needed to inform Federal contractors about effective hiring strategies.

> ***"The last group of people in this country who could keep the economy going for all of us, with low inflation, are Americans with disabilities — who want to work, who can work, and who are not in the workforce. Every American citizen should have a selfish interest in the pursuit of this goal in the most aggressive possible way."***
>
> —President Clinton, June 4, 1999

The enforcement agencies also should explore methods to strengthen their investigation processes. For example, the Department of Labor, through the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP), should utilize compliance evaluation procedures that allow the agency to focus on systemic barriers to the employment of individuals with disabilities. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), in coordination with the Department of Justice and the Department of Labor, should explore enhancing data collection efforts with respect to the employment and the availability of persons with disabilities in the workforce, possibly through new regulations. Consistent with their complementary responsibilities for enforcement, the EEOC and OFCCP should explore joint enforcement strategies.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force recommends that *the Department of Justice, Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission be provided increased resources to collaborate in exploring methods for strengthening enforcement of employment-related nondiscrimination provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. All efforts shall provide a clear and unequivocal message that expanded employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities are a high priority of the Administration. The efforts of the Department of Labor and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission should include providing increased technical assistance to employers, strengthening compliance evaluations, and enhancing data collection as appropriate.*

There are multiple additional ways that we can reach our desired goal for increasing employment. The February 2000 release of standards governing Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act provides a critical opportunity that can be leveraged both for procuring accessible technology and equipment, and for increasing employment of adults with disabilities through the availability of such equipment. As the largest purchaser of technology and equipment, the Federal Government's procurement practices must be leveraged to promote development of technology that is accessible to and useable by people with disabilities. In addition, the recently promulgated regulations governing Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act include provisions to influence development of communication technologies for the future that are accessible to people with disabilities. These regulations, providing for an information highway infrastructure that is accessible, create opportunities for expanded employment for people with disabilities.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore, as a nation we must make a significant investment of our resources targeted specifically to ensuring access to accessible and affordable information, communication and assistive technology for people with disabilities. As we enter a new century, we must ensure through our actions today that the workers of tomorrow are prepared with skills and training, and equipped with the tools necessary to succeed.

The year 2000 marks the Tenth Anniversary of enactment of the ADA. As we prepare to celebrate the anniversary of this landmark civil rights law, we must leverage the leadership of the Federal Government through vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws and oversight of critical regulatory requirements. The Federal Government can also demonstrate, through its own exemplary practice, effective strategies as a model employer.

> ***"... Improving opportunities for people with disabilities is a win-win situation for everyone. For people with disabilities, it means inclusion, freedom, and empowerment. For business, it means more customers, higher profits, and additional qualified workers. For taxpayers, it means millions more people contributing to the system, and fewer people dependent on it. We know it won't be easy ... "***
>
> —Vice President Al Gore, 1999

The Power and Responsibility to Participate

Ours is a government *of* the people, *for* the people, *by* the people — individual voices shaping our collective future as a nation. Each person has the power — and the responsibility — to participate. Our democracy affords each person a voice. More and more people with disabilities are using their personal power in this participatory democracy — making their voices heard — thereby influencing the ways that programs and policies are designed and delivered.

Every day in communities across the nation there are new opportunities to take part in the democratic process, to create change that will open the door to employment and full participation for people with disabilities. The Clinton-Gore administration has taken the lead in reinventing government and much of the impetus for this change came from the voices of the people. One example of reinventing government services is the "Access America for Seniors," an Internet site providing information on a wide range of government services. Vice President Gore described this as ... "an excellent example of our efforts to reinvent government to provide services that American people need and care about."

President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force commends the steadfast commitment of the Administration to ensure that opportunities of the Information Age are available to all Americans, and especially to children who are our future. *The Task Force respectfully requests consideration of additional resources to establish a new Web site specifically addressing Federal Government programs and policies for people with disabilities. Access America for People with Disabilities will link persons with disabilities and other interested individuals with comprehensive information so that they can effectively navigate their worlds and ultimately more effectively participate in their communities and the workforce.*

The Task Force, led by Secretary of Labor and Chair Alexis M. Herman and Vice Chair Tony Coelho, is taking the lead in reshaping Federal employment policies for people with disabilities by actively reaching out to key stakeholders across the nation to involve them in the debate about change. During this year, numerous Town Hall meetings were held to provide a forum for interested persons to discuss their thoughts, concerns and experiences about employment for people with disabilities. The first Town Hall meeting, held in Los Angeles on June 3, 1999, focused on two key areas — expanding employment opportunities for young people with disabilities and expanding self-employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

At this first Town Hall meeting individuals with disabilities, parents, educators and other interested people provided in-depth testimony about issues, specifically relating to young people, such as transition from school to work. The overwhelming majority of voices implored Task Force members to make young people with disabilities a priority when developing future projects and examining public policy. Task Force members heard firsthand accounts from young people about the lack of options available for employment and economic independence. These young people with disabilities very eloquently outlined multiple barriers that they face while in school and as they attempt to transition into the workplace. Some of these barriers included the following: lack of adequate educational accomplishment; low expectation by their family, the education system, service providers and societal expectation in general; their own low self-esteem; and confusing governmental programs with baffling eligibility criteria and goals.

Each year, about 40,000 eighteen-year-olds are subject to an eligibility review for SSI benefits, but only 25,000 are determined eligible for such assistance. On average, the young adults determined eligible will remain on SSI for 27 years, while those not determined eligible are likely to live in poverty. As we prepare to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of one of the most comprehensive civil rights laws for young people with disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, it is imperative that aggressive efforts be taken to examine the disconnect that seems to be occurring in the lives of young people with disabilities. *President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force recommends that the Departments of*

"In many ways, the workplace of tomorrow will be determined by the work we do today — the policies we pursue, the partnerships we forge, the challenges we meet... And if we continue to meet that challenge, we won't just mark the end of the American century, we will embrace with all its potential and possibilities the beginning of a new one."

—Alexis M. Herman, Labor Day 1999

Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, the Social Security Administration and other appropriate Task Force member agencies construct, coordinate and implement a Youth-to-Work Initiative to address this critical area of need.

At this first Town Hall meeting Task Force members also learned from participants about their growing interest in and concerns about entrepreneurial opportunities and provision of personal assistance services. People with disabilities at the meeting said they often call for, but seldom receive, consumer-driven personal assistance — that is, the ability to manage, direct and, in many cases, hire their own personal assistants through some sort of voucher payment. Providing personal assistance to an estimated seven to ten million Americans with disabilities with a variety of everyday living tasks is fast becoming a multibillion dollar "growth" industry. Moreover, it is one financed primarily through Federal Medicaid and Medicare payments. Between three and six billion dollars in Federal and State dollars are estimated to be spent on such services annually.

Additionally, the Task Force learned that recent research indicates that, on average, agency personal assistance providers cost nearly twice as much as individual providers ($10.20 versus $5.25 per hour). More than half of this difference is not the result of paying individual providers less, but the administrative costs built into the home health care business. The Federal Government, therefore, has a strong human and economic interest in helping to generate competition in this field. The resounding message from this Town Hall meeting was the need to explore initiatives to spur the development of small businesses and micro enterprises owned and controlled by individuals with disabilities in the delivery of personal assistance services.

The second Town Hall meeting, held in Birmingham, Alabama, on October 25, 1999, focused on civil rights laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The testimony from women and minority participants at this meeting was of particular interest to Task Force members, and proved to be an invaluable resource for further development of initiatives to eliminate barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. The major themes garnered from the many individuals who provided eloquent testimony concerned the barriers that lack of transportation and housing create for people with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas.

Task Force members heard over and over again that lack of available public transportation is a major employment barrier for persons with disabilities. According to the Department of Transportation's report to the Task Force in November 1998, "Persons with disabilities tend to be more dependent on transit service than the general public, and the prevailing transportation patterns in the U.S. — dominated by sprawling development patterns and highly dependent on highways and private automobiles — put *all* dependent populations at a disadvantage."

Individuals testifying at the Town Hall meeting expressed frustration with the lack of planning and coordination of public and human service transportation providers. Many living in rural areas said that lack of adequate transportation has been a long standing problem, and they did not hold much hope for a brighter future. *President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force recommends that immediate steps be taken to develop a comprehensive plan of action to address the lack of transportation services and systems for persons with disabilities, especially those living in rural areas.*

The Task Force would be remiss if this report failed to document the need for immediate action in the area of housing for individuals with disabilities. Many participants at the Town Hall meeting shared with Task Force members the direct relationship of restrictive housing eligibility criteria and the ability to find and keep meaningful work. In addition to concerns about maintaining health care, people with disabilities are increasingly worried that if they go to work they will lose their eligibility for housing subsidies. The need to explore avenues for increasing home ownership by people with disabilities is also paramount.

Despite the Department of Housing and Urban Development's support for increasing services available to low income and special needs populations and passage of the "Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998," testimony provided at this meeting showed that much more needs to be done. Participants pointed out to Task Force members that many benefits of the 1998 Act are not available to them because they are not part of a public housing authority program. As of October 1, 1999, a provision within the new Act establishes a mandatory disregard of 100 percent of earned income for a period of 12 months. This is followed by a rent increase of only 50 percent of the amount it otherwise would have been increased without the disregard. *President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force recommends that the Department of Housing and Urban Development explore steps needed to establish an earned income disregard for tenants with disabilities living in other-than-PHA housing who return to work; and a provision which exempts any disability related expenses incurred when a tenant goes to work from the countable income used to determine rents.*

As previously stated, ours is a government *of* the people, *for* the people, *by* the people — individual voices shaping our collective future as a nation. Each person has the power — and the responsibility — to participate. People with disabilities, parents of individuals with disabilities and other interested persons embraced these principles and provided the Task Force with invaluable input into the overall mission to eliminate the barriers to employment for adults with disabilities. The Task Force appreciates the willingness of each participant to share their opinions and expertise and hopes that each will see that it was not in vain. More Town Hall meetings are planned throughout the year 2000.

The Task Force also convened numerous meetings throughout the year, including summits on welfare-to-work, youth leadership, and ongoing State and local systems change initiatives, as well as outreach to groups who experience particularly high unemployment, such as Native Americans. A Research Roundtable brought together Federal agencies conducting research to begin to identify gaps and needed areas for future focus of Federal discretionary dollars. The goal of these meetings was to identify specific policy-related actions for Task Force consideration.

These meetings began what will be an ongoing process for ensuring access to cutting-edge, real-world, policy-related information and recommendations by the Task Force and its staff. They reflect our determination to ensure that the debate about change is open to all. Combined with communication through technology established through the Task Force Web site, no one is left out of the dialogue.

Despite the efforts from the Task Force to reach out to all stakeholders across the nation to involve them in the debate about change needed to eliminate the barriers to employment, one voice has remained less than front and center where it is desperately needed. President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force requests your assistance in forging an alliance with business leaders in the public and private sectors. *The Task Force recommends that there be a White House conference on employment of adults with disabilities that will include representatives from the Administration, Congress, elected officials from State and local governments, small and large businesses, the disability community and other related entities regarding employment of people with disabilities.*

> ***"A revolution of values will soon call us to question the fairness of many of our past and present policies. True compassion is more than flinging coins to a beggar... an edifice that produces beggars needs restructuring..."***
>
> —Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

THE NEXT MILLENNIUM: Equity, Responsibility, Freedom, Justice and Employment for All

The Task Force is looking into the next millennium recognizing the crucial and timely nature of its charge to develop a coordinated and aggressive national strategy. This year it became clear that additional Task Force members are needed in order to ensure that all policies and practices are viewed from a disability perspective. The Task Force requested the addition of the Federal Communications Commission, Chaired by William E. Kennard, to the Task Force. This was accomplished in April 1999. The Task Force will request that the Attorney General of the Department of Justice, and the Secretaries of the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Agriculture and the Interior be added for Fiscal Year 2000, so that their important jurisdictions can become a part of the overall mission and actions undertaken through Task Force activities.

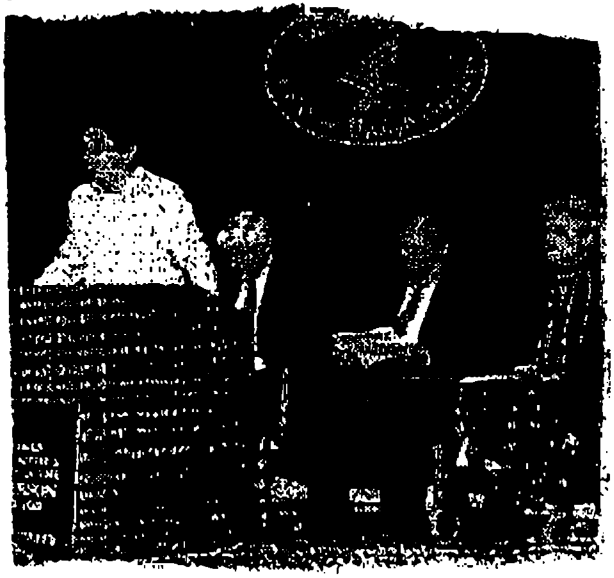
Meanwhile, the Task Force has identified the need for a major realignment of resources and programs to ensure that a strategy for eliminating barriers to employment for adults with disabilities is a theme of the next millennium. The structures and practices of our public systems have taken decades to evolve, have become cemented in their way of doing business, have become very familiar and comfortable to many people both inside the Federal Government and outside. Altering these structures in a deep, substantive way will be difficult, and long-term success will require a continuing mandate for change in order to prevent the patterns and practices of the past from persisting.

President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force respectfully recommends the establishment of an Office for disability employment policy to be headed by an Assistant Secretary at the Department of Labor. The purpose of the proposed new office will not be to replicate service delivery systems currently provided through other parts of the department or Federal Government, but to provide the programmatic infrastructure for needed employment policy direction, best practice leadership, information dissemination and technical assistance. The Office will ensure the ongoing efforts to integrate people with disabilities into the mainstream employment and training programs of the Department of Labor as they are implemented across the nation. It is a critical next step to implement the strategy being developed by the Task Force.

As the Task Force continues its work toward the goals set forth in Executive Order 13078, the foundation of our redesign must be based on increased choice and control for *all* people in getting the services and supports they need to participate in a meaningful and effective way in their communities and the workforce. Federal dollars must be used as investments in the lives of people with disabilities so that they can get the supports they need to live, meaningfully participate in and contribute to their community. This redesign will require examining how the resources of existing Federal funding streams are used. It will most likely necessitate modifying those policies that promote dependence and segregation so that people with even significant disabilities have not only the opportunity to get a job, but to achieve economic independence, and control over their lives.

Recognizing the urgency of attacking this critical issue, the Task Force will convene a Summit in January 2000 called "Beyond Theory and Discussion: Supported Employment Strategies for the 21st Century." This venue will provide an opportunity to probe multiple issues, including those relating to increasing wages, community-based employment, choice and control, among others. "Despite a lot of theory and discussion about educational best practices, despite talk of inclusion and equal opportunity, there is the reality that many of our young people are sitting at home or in group homes doing close to nothing after they leave high school ... There is an untapped potential out here, just waiting for the opportunity," said Mrs. Gaye Avery-Grubbs, parent of Tamara who has significant disabilities. The Task Force is committed to tapping into the potential of every person with a disability.

Finally, it is alarming that, as we move toward the 21st Century, the persistence of negative and erroneous stereotypes and attitudinal barriers remain one of the most difficult barriers to address. Decades of erroneous societal thinking about disability have demonstrated that they will not be eliminated overnight. An understanding that disability is a natural part of life, an appreciation of the benefits of people with disabilities as employers, employees, neighbors and friends, and the awareness that presence of a disability does not define the person must be created in the American public. Only through such awareness can we hope to make eliminating barriers to employment for people with disabilities the mainstream policy interest that it deserves.



October 13, 1999

Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala addresses participants at IDEAS '99 (Interagency Disability Educational Awareness Showcase), held at DHHS in Washington, D.C.

Also pictured from left to right: John J. Callahan, Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget, DHHS; Michael V. Dunn, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, USDA; and Rebecca L. Ogle, Executive Director of the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities

The need for immediate leadership in this area is essential to the success of any strategy to increase employment and economic independence for people with disabilities. *President Clinton and Vice President Gore, there is an immediate need to launch a massive public awareness campaign, in partnership with the disability community, businesses and other influential entities, to eliminate the erroneous beliefs, the stigma that permeates all parts of American society regarding disability.*

The Task Force is committed to the challenges outlined in this second report, and knows that as challenges are confronted there will naturally be conflict and controversy — born of fear, of lack of information, of lack of understanding. *President Clinton and Vice President Gore, the Task Force believes this debate is past due, and must occur.* Task Force members recognize that there will be doubters; there will be cynics. But it is an established fact that with the continued support of the Clinton-Gore administration and members of Congress, this debate can result in systemic redesign of our policies so that no one is left behind in the next millennium.

The Task Force acknowledges that there has never before been such a mandate — or opportunity — for change as the one created through Executive Order 13078. The Task Force will constantly push for bold, courageous strategies for change that reach to the roots of our policies. The choices are ours as a nation. We must not be afraid of new ideas. The debate that has begun must continue, and it must be elevated. As we close the 20th century and look to the future, the challenges that remain require our willingness to raise difficult and sometimes controversial questions about existing social policies, practices and attitudes. They require a raging debate that results in deep, substantive change. The time for action is now. ***If Not Now, When?***

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
002. email	Jonathan Young to Devorah Adler re: phone number (partial) (1 page)	12/14/1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

Jeffords - Kennedy

2012-0463-S
rc773

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

Jonathan M. Young
12/14/99 10:44:02 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Devorah R. Adler/OPD/EOP@EOP, Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP, Jeanne Lambrew/OPD/EOP@EOP, Sarah A. Bianchi/OVP@OVP

cc:
Subject: HEre are three from Albany area

[002]

Maxcine Johnson, P6/(b)(6) at town hall meeting with Gore in February

Debbie Hamilton, working part time at the RPI polytechnic institute, can't work full time because of risk of losing health benefits, P6/(b)(6) office, 5[redacted]-2746;

clif perez, also not working full time for fear of lost benefits, participated in White House SS conference last December, P6/(b)(6)

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
003. list	re: People Not on the Invitation List (2 pages)	n.d.	P6/b(6)

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Devorah Adler
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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
004. email	Jonathan Young to Devorah Adler et al. re: Contact in Northern Virginia (partial) (1 page)	12/14/1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

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Jonathan M. Young
12/14/99 11:01:15 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Devorah R. Adler/OPD/EOP@EOP, Sarah A. Bianchi/OVP@OVP, Jeanne Lambrew/OPD/EOP@EOP, Karin Kullman/OPD/EOP@EOP

cc:
Subject: Contact in Northern Virginia

Feel free to follow-up with Michael Cooper at the Endependence Center of Northern Virginia, one of the best IL centers in the metro DC area. I've already talked to him and he will begin identifying folks. His phone numbers are: office, (703) 525-3268, home, P6/(b)(6) [004]

I spoke to David Robar, who said devorah had already spoken with him, and he's working to identify additional folks. The challenge is press savvy people but he will work on some more.

K For the West Coast, try Michael Collins, head of the State Independent Living Council for California, P6/(b)(6)

I have a message in to anne Marie Hughey at the National Council on independent Living, which represents the IL centers around the country. P6/(b)(6)

K The parent network can be tapped through Patty McGill Smith, ED, P6/(b)(6) or Linda Shepard, President, P6/(b)(6)

I also have a message into Tony Young, prominent DC advocate, who works from home at P6/(b)(6) P6/(b)(6)

K Barbara Otto, 312-223-9600, x18, for contacts in the Chicago area. One suggestion from her is Ron Cluck, has done some local media, uses a message board, but Barbara needs to confirm with him.

I have a message into Jean-Michelle Brevelle at NAPWA, P6/(b)(6)

D For Arizona try Susan Webb, head of an IL center there. P6/(b)(6)

K Joyce Bender could be of great help in Pittsburgh, helped on mentoring day and received President's Award in June, P6/(b)(6)

K Lee Miller in Georgia, runs a great program called High School high Tech in Georgia, brought some folks in her from mentoring day, number is P6/(b)(6)

I'll get more contacts later.

Joyce Bender in

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005. list	re: people for round table (1 page)	n.d.	P6/b(6)

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PRESIDENTIAL TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

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006. letter	Becky Ogle to Chris (partial) (1 page)	12/13/1999	P6/b(6)

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Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

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456-5221

[redacted]

Chris,

Thanks for taking the time to review this and to see whether or not we can provide Secretary Herman the opportunity to present it on Friday. It is significant in the fact that the first report to the President recommended passage of the WIIA and now he is signing it and accepting the second report that lays out implementation plans, as well as other recommendations that are very important to the employment of people with disabilities. There is nothing controversial in the report, and according to P6/(b)(6) [006]

P6/(b)(6)

The significance of the Task Force is it's ability to work in a cross-agency way on issues such as implementation. We were going to put a directive or recommendation in the report that called on the President to direct Donna Shalala to expedite the grant and infrastructure funds to the states, but Jeanne asked us not to. We had also intended to ask that the WIIA be revisited to bring it to where we were w/Medicare, but I think OMB objected or someone did so it got taken out too.

Anyhow, I have enclosed for your review highlights of the Task Force report to the President, especially the parts of the Health Care and Income Committee report where they talk about the implementation of the WIIA. This is working so I would suggest not creating another entity to do this, in fact, I beg of you not to create another entity. It is difficult enough getting them to all work together in this arena without asking them to step into another. Turf has been established and I think everyone is comfortable with the boundaries.

Let me know what you think. I really want to hand this report over to the President and get it out the door. We are way past due.

Thanks,

B. Ogle

Becky Ogle

for an extended period, if the prognosis for improvement continues. Access to return to work services will also be provided to assist beneficiaries to move from the rolls to economic independence. The demonstration is scheduled to run for five years.

3. **Preparing for Implementation of Work Incentives Improvement Act (WIIA)** - SSA and the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) are actively working toward implementation of the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (WIIA). SSA has developed language for notices with HCFA input pertaining to the section of the Act that applies to continuation of Medicare coverage and has entered into an agreement with HCFA staff for expedited notice clearance upon passage of the WIIA. Since portions of the WIIA are effective on the first day of the month following enactment, preliminary action is necessary for effective implementation.

4. **Internet Information Sources** - SSA's Office of Employment Support Programs website **(www.ssa.gov/work)** has a link to HCFA's site and has recently added a section entitled "Health Care for People with Disabilities."

B. Departmental Efforts

1. **Research Agenda** - HHS has a solid research agenda which is underway to review the evidence that supports the proposition that people do not seek work because they fear losing health coverage. While there are few empirical studies to date, it is clear from the data we have that health care access is an important factor in the decision to seek work.

   Currently, a study is underway to look at labor force participation and earnings levels of people with disabilities before and after substantial Medicaid expansions in Tennessee and Oregon. In addition, HHS is analyzing data from the National Health Interview Survey on people with disabilities, the first comprehensive survey of Americans with disabilities. This survey will provide information and data needed to gain a better understanding about earnings, barriers, accommodations and health care spending and utilization. Lastly, CMHS is conducting the Employment Intervention Demonstration Program (EIDP) which is a 5-year demonstration being carried out in 8 sites to identify and evaluate the types of supports most effective for helping people with psychiatric disabilities find and maintain employment. The effects of employment on the use of mental health services and public entitlements is being measured.

2. **Patient's Bill of Rights Legislative Effort** - There are few populations in this country who will benefit more than people with disabilities from the passage of the Administration's Patient Bill of Rights. Ensuring continuity of

RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Health Care Work Group* has identified the following issues related to the improvement of employment outcomes for people with disabilities and made preliminary recommendations for addressing these issues and barriers.

Issue: Congress changed the Medicaid eligibility rules for working individuals with disabilities when it passed section 4733 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, allowing states to offer a buy-in to Medicaid to individuals whose income is below 250% of the federal poverty level. To date, six states have implemented the Balanced Budget Act provisions.

Recommendation: More states need to be encouraged to implement the Balanced Budget Act Medicaid buy-in provisions:

- HCFA will continue to provide technical assistance and advice to states interested in implementing the current Medicaid buy-in provision.

- HCFA, the Social Security Administration, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration will work together to interest states already undertaking work incentives demonstrations sponsored by these agencies to take up the BBA Medicaid buy-in. HCFA will build on this experience to ensure the effective implementation of the Work Incentives Improvement Act once it becomes law.

- HCFA will identify key individuals from states that have successfully developed BBA state plan options and other work incentive programs and encourage those individuals to provide technical assistance to other states. The technical assistance provided by HCFA and its state partners will be mindful of the cultural preferences of the beneficiaries in different regions of the country.

- The Task Force will work with HCFA to investigate issues related to state participation in the buy-in option.

Issue: Current limitations in work incentives programs related to income limits and continuation of benefits are addressed in the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999. These limitations include an income ceiling for beneficiaries eligible for Medicaid and the termination of Medicare benefits following an extended period of eligibility. Implementation of WIIA will challenge the Department of Health and Human Services to ensure that the health care provisions expanding eligibility criteria and extending benefits are effective. Cooperation in implementation across agencies will increase the likelihood of success.

Recommendation: The Department of Health and Human Services will develop a comprehensive blueprint of implementation activities to be submitted, after the Work Incentives Improvement Act is signed by President Clinton, to the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities for review.

The Administration participated in developing and fully supported the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, passed by both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives in November 1999. The Work Incentives Improvement Act includes the following provisions related to health care for people with disabilities who start or return to work:

- Health insurance through Medicaid by providing states with an option to offer a buy-in to people with disabilities by lifting federal eligibility limits on assets and earned and unearned income.
- An option for states to continue coverage (on a buy-in basis) for working individuals with disabilities whose medical conditions remain, but who would otherwise lose eligibility due to medical improvement.
- Health insurance through Medicare by extending lifetime coverage under Medicare Part A to any individual who loses Social Security due to their ability to work and earn a living during a specified time period following enactment of the legislation.
- Infrastructure grants for states that take advantage of the Medicaid buy-in for the working disabled and offer personal assistance services (PAS). These grants would be used to assist in developing infrastructures that facilitate return to work and for outreach campaigns to connect individuals with services.
- $250 million for a 5-year demonstration program would allow participating states to provide Medicaid-equivalent services to individuals with health conditions that have not yet rendered them blind or disabled, but that can be expected to cause the level of disability required to qualify for SSI/SSDI.

The implementation plan will include technical assistance efforts, research and evaluation projects, data linking activities, outreach and enrollment activities, and issuance of state guidance on both the new legislation and existing work incentives programs. A goal of each of these activities will be to ensure that all materials developed are culturally sensitive and respectful of the preferences of our beneficiaries.

The plan will coordinate with the efforts of other federal agencies such as the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Social Security Administration. HCFA will make concerted efforts – in consultation with the states, the disability community and other Federal agencies -- to ensure the effective and widespread implementation of the Medicaid buy-in and infrastructure development grant provisions of the Work Incentives

Improvement Act once it is enacted into law. In particular, HCFA will: (1) begin to provide information on the Act's major health care access provisions to states and disability groups, e.g., through correspondences with the Governors, State Medicaid Directors and via the Web; (2) provide technical assistance and support to states wishing to take up the Medicaid buy-in and demonstration provisions of the new law; and (3) expeditiously award infrastructure development grants to states which participate in the Medicaid buy-in.

Issue: Both the SSDI and SSI programs offer work incentives that enable beneficiaries to continue receiving income supports and health care coverage after returning to work. Participation rates in these work incentives are very low and should be increased though outreach, public education, and technical assistance activities. In addition, the federal government should engage in longer term planning to develop a single set of messages from all agencies, that can be clearly understood by all constituencies.

Recommendation: HHS, DOL, SSA and RSA will form an interagency workgroup to develop a consumer outreach campaign to raise awareness around work incentives and facilitate individual participation in work incentive programs (such as 1619 and the Program for Achieving Self-Support or PASS.) This work group will coordinate state outreach and consumer education efforts, examine knowledge and attitudinal barriers to consumer participation in work incentive programs, and make recommendations on current and future programmatic and budget efforts related to consumer education of work incentive programs.

In the short term, HHS, DOL, SSA, and RSA will work together to develop more user-friendly resources and consumer resource guides synthesizing existing health and income related work incentive programs, benefits and demonstrations at the Federal and state levels. These Resource Guides will provide technical assistance to people with disabilities and the disability community about the health and income-related resources currently available which will enable individuals to succeed in the workforce.

In the next 12 months, the workgroup will identify joint technical assistance, outreach, education and coordination activities they can undertake to promote the increased use of existing work incentives such as those available under Section 1619 of the Social Security Act particularly by young people with disabilities, ages 16 to 25. In order to ensure that a broad audience is exposed to information about work incentives, HCFA will participate along with other federal partners in SSA's (300+) targeted public education events for consumers, advocates, state officials, providers, and any other interested parties over the next fiscal year. Topics for such events will include: (1) SSA - Field Office Employment Initiatives; (2) Customer Service Improvements; (3) Health Care Initiatives and Options; (4) WIIA Update; (5) Best practices from the states; and (6) other local issues.

Finally, SSA will develop and begin implementation of a customer service improvement plan in FY 2000 which will focus on providing more timely and accurate information at the Field Office level to SSI and SSDI beneficiaries who pursue employment or return-to-work.

Issue: Medicaid, as virtually the only public payor of long-term supports, offers states a great deal of flexibility in structuring and delivering consumer responsive long-term support and personal assistance services programs. States need information and incentives to maximize this flexibility.

Recommendation: The Department of Health and Human Services will promote and expand its technical assistance to states -- supporting states in developing and improving consumer responsive home and community based services systems. Such systems will be critical for many people with disabilities who work. HHS will ensure that the employment aspect of this work is highlighted. As the focal point for these activities in FY 2000, the agency is developing a resource center for states, advocacy groups, and consumers to use in order to promote home and community-based alternatives in their states. In addition, HHS will be completing its Medicaid Primer, a synthesis of information that will explain in clear language what flexibilities states have under Medicaid to deliver home and community based supports and provide examples of what a number of states have done in this regard. HHS will ensure that people involved in employment services and supports have access to the Primer, so there is an accurate, common understanding of Medicaid provisions.

Issue: People with disabilities have a number of concerns related to the design and delivery of health care services. Issues include access to facilities, access to specialists, quality of care, and appeals. The issues become even more prominent for people with disabilities who work. Medicare and Medicaid should be studied and improved to assure that these concerns are addressed, both in managed care and fee-for-service contexts.

Recommendation: The Department of Health and Human Services has undertaken a research agenda focusing on health care and people with disabilities. Projects include qualitative and quantitative analyses of Medicaid managed care, care coordination and single point of access. A critical factor in providing quality health care to Medicaid beneficiaries is service coordination both in managed care and fee for service environments. HCFA will research care coordination for Medicaid services in both fee-for-service and managed care delivery systems, in order to share with all state Medicaid agencies a composite summary of care coordination models used by states that enhance access to health care services that may be critical for employment by beneficiaries with disabilities. In addition, HCFA will develop new policies and initiatives to reduce identified barriers to service coordination for working people with disabilities.

404 639
7111

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
007. schedule	Schedule for the President re: phone number (partial) (1 page)	12/17/1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

Jeffords - Kennedy

2012-0463-S
rc773

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- **P1** National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- **P2** Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- **P3** Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- **P4** Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- **P5** Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [a)(5) of the PRA]
- **P6** Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

- **C.** Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
- **PRM.** Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
- **RR.** Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- **b(1)** National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
- **b(2)** Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- **b(3)** Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
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- **b(7)** Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- **b(8)** Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- **b(9)** Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1999

Draft Schedule

[007]

SCHEDULING DIRECTOR:	**STEPHANIE STREETT**	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	**202-456-2823**
	WHCA PAGER:	**4824**
PRESS DESK:	**KAREN BURCHARD**	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	**202-456-7193**
	WHCA PAGER:	**4769**
EVENT COORDINATOR:	**JULIE EDDY**	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	**202-456-5330**
	WHCA PAGER:	**4560**
EVENT COORDINATOR:	**TIMOTHY EMRICH**	
	HOME:	P6/(b)(6)
	OFFICE:	**202-456-5306**
	WHCA PAGER:	**4161**
WEATHER:	**WASHINGTON, D.C.**	

SCHEDULE OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1999
Draft Schedule

9:00 am-
9:15 am **BRIEFING**
OVAL OFFICE
Staff Contact: Mary Beth Cahill, Bruce Reed

9:20 am **THE PRESIDENT** departs The White House via motorcade en route Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
[drive time: 5 minutes]

9:25 am **THE PRESIDENT** arrives Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial

Greeters: Roosevelt Family

Friday, December 17, 1999

9:30 am-
10:15 am
JEFFORDS/KENNEDY BILL SIGNING
FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL
(RAIN SITE TBD)
Remarks: Sam Afridi
Staff Contact: Mary Beth Cahill, Bruce Reed
Event Coordinator: Laura Graham
OPEN PRESS

Note: There will be approximately 300 guests in attendance.

@stage +
POTUS

Kennedy
Jeffords
Justin
Real Person
+3

-- Off-stage announcement of Secretary Donna Shalala, Secretary Alexis Herman, Administrator Kenneth Apfel, and 3 Real People TBD.

-- Off-stage announcement of **the President**, accompanied by Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator James Jeffords, and Real Person TBD.

-- Senator Edward Kennedy makes brief remarks and introduces Senator James Jeffords.

-- Senator James Jeffords makes brief remarks and introduces Real Person TBD.

-- Person TBD makes brief remarks and introduces **the President**.

-- **The President** makes remarks and invites Members of Congress to stage for the legislation signing.

-- **The President** works a ropeline and departs.

Members Roth
Lazio
for ceremony
18 pending

10:40 am-
11:00 am
BRIEFING
OVAL OFFICE
Staff Contact: Samuel Berger

11:00 am-
12:30 pm
US-EU SUMMIT
LOCATION TBD
Staff Contact: Samuel Berger

12:30 pm-
1:30 pm
BUDGET MEETING
CABINET ROOM
Staff Contact: Gene Sperling, Jack Lew

IRMA
Janelle — to reserve seats ahead of time

Cost is
$35,000

10 press
5 IGA
50 Leg
40 Cabinet
200 OPL

December 15, 1999 (2:39 PM)

1:30 pm- **DGA STRATEGY SESSION**
3:00 pm YELLOW OVAL ROOM
Staff Contact: Capricia Marshall, Minyon Moore
Event Coordinator: Laura Schwartz
CLOSED PRESS

Note: There will be approximately tbd guests in attendance.

3:15 pm- **PHONE AND OFFICE TIME**
5:30 pm OVAL OFFICE DINING ROOM

5:30 pm- **MEETING**
5:40 pm OVAL OFFICE DINING ROOM
Staff Contact: Stephanie Streett

5:45 pm- **BRIEFING**
6:15 pm OVAL OFFICE DINING ROOM
Staff Contact: Joe Lockhart

6:15 pm- **INTERVIEW WITH KATIE COURIC**
6:45 pm OVAL OFFICE
Staff Contact: Joe Lockhart

7:00 pm **THE PRESIDENT** departs The White House via motorcade en route
Private Residence
[drive time: tbd]

7:15 pm **THE PRESIDENT** arrives Private Residence

Greeters: Terry McAuliffe
Dorothy McAuliffe

7:20 pm- **PHOTO RECEIVING LINE**
7:50 pm LIVING ROOM
Private Residence
Staff Contact: Minyon Moore
Event Coordinator: Heather Davis
CLOSED PRESS

Note: There will be approximately 80 guests in attendance.

7:55 pm- **DCCC DINNER**
8:40 pm DINING ROM
Private Residence
Staff Contact: Minyon Moore
Event Coordinator: Heather Davis
PRINT REPORTER (REMARKS ONLY)

Note: There will be approximately 80 guests in attendance.

-- Terry McAuliffe makes brief welcoming remarks and introduces Representative Patrick Kennedy.

-- Representative Patrick Kennedy makes brief remarks and introduces Representative Richard Gephardt.

-- Representative Richard Gephardt makes brief remarks and introduces **the President.**

-- **The President** makes remarks and departs.

8:45 pm **THE PRESIDENT** departs Private Residence via motorcade en route The White House
[drive time: tbd]

9:00 pm **THE PRESIDENT** arrives The White House

BC/HRC RON **THE WHITE HOUSE**
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
008. letter	re: People Not on the Invitation List (1 page)	n.d.	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

Jeffords - Kennedy

2012-0463-S
rc773

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

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- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
009. email	Lee to Karin Kullman re: personal medical (1 page)	12/14/1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

Jeffords - Kennedy

2012-0463-S
rc773

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
010. article	re: phone numbers (partial) (10 pages)	ca. 1999	P6/b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Devorah Adler
OA/Box Number: 20146

FOLDER TITLE:

Jeffords - Kennedy

2012-0463-S
rc773

RESTRICTION CODES

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Devorah
216 060B
[010]

P6/(b)(6)TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

pyright 1999 Madison Newspapers, Inc.
Wisconsin State Journal

October 9, 1999, Saturday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: Opinion, P6/(b)(6) GUEST COLUMN

LENGTH: 464 words

HEADLINE: WORK IN WOULD IMPROVE LIFE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

BYLINE: Dorothy Valentine

P6/(b)(6)

BODY:

I urge everyone to write to their congressmen asking them to vote for the Work Incentive Improvement Act of 1999.

Every individual should have the opportunity to lead a full, productive life while participating in and contributing to the community at large. Enactment of the Work Incentive Improvement Act will go a long way toward achieving this goal.

While the country is seeing unprecedented low unemployment rates, the unemployment rate among working-aged individuals with disabilities is nearly 75 percent. A 1998 Harris poll found that 72 percent of people with disabilities who are not employed wish to work.

Fear of losing health insurance is the reason cited most often for not joining the work force. Think about it. If a person cannot get out of bed without help in the morning, how is he/she going to get to work? If they loose health benefits, they lose attendant care, meaning they are not able to get out of bed to get to work.

Many, many want to work. This bill will not give them anything they don't already have. It would allow them to become tax-paying citizens with the ability to live a full life, like everyone else.

I have both a personal and a professional interest in this bill.

Personally, I am a person with multiple sclerosis who is about to finish graduate school in rehabilitation psychology. I very much want to work. For me to do so successfully, I need to know my medical benefits will continue. I also need to know I have the ability to go back on Social Security should I have an MS attack that stops me from being able to work.

I am not able to start the ''disability process'' all over again. What would I live on while waiting the year it takes to get back on Social Security?

Multiple sclerosis is an ever-changing disease. In my case, which is a relapsing/remitting form of the illness, I can be healthy one day and have an attack the next that precludes my ability to do almost anything. This relapse can happen at any time, without warning. Then it can remit, leaving me somewhat healthy again. The more attacks I have, the less chance of recovering fully.

just turned 50 years old
MS @ 35
♀ daughter 25
single parent since 5
9 years old — she became too sick to do her job at that time — first was very ill; stayed alive for her daughter
lives on 2nd floor

This Sunday she's graduating Masters in Rehab Psych

I need medication, which costs about $ 1,000 a month, to elongate the times between attacks, meaning I will become less disabled over time. But, should I have an attack, which can be mild to severe, I need to know I have the safety net of Social Security to fall back on immediately.

While I am in a healthy mode, I can work, pay taxes, buy a house, a car and live life to the fullest possible.

The Work Incentive Improvement Act means a chance at a full, tax-paying life for me and everyone who wants to work but has a disability.

Every human being has the potential to become disabled, either by accident or illness. We are all only a breath away.

NOTES:
Valentine lives in Waunakee.

LOAD-DATE: October 11, 1999

not in a chair —
had an
she is not working
now —
won't be able
to work full time
needs to know that she can
fall back immediately
if she went back
to work

88TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Madison Newspapers, Inc.
Capital Times (Madison, WI.)

November 2, 1999, Tuesday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: Editorial, Pg. 9A

LENGTH: 482 words

HEADLINE: DISABLED PEOPLE WANT TO WORK, BUT NEED BILL APPROVED

BYLINE: Dorothy Valentine Waunakee

BODY:

Dear Editor: Every individual should have the opportunity to lead a full, productive life while participating in and contributing to the community by working.

Enactment of HR 1180, the Work Incentive Improvement Act of 1999, will go a long way toward achieving this goal.

While the country is seeing unprecedented low unemployment rates, the unemployment rate among working-aged individuals with disabilities is nearly 75 percent.

A 1998 Harris poll found that 72 percent of people with disabilities who are not employed wish to work. Fear of losing health insurance is the reason cited most often for not joining the work force.

Think about this: If a person cannot get out of bed without attendant help in the morning, how is he/she going to get to work? If an individual tries to work under the current system, he/she will lose health benefits, meaning they lose attendant care.

Without attendant care they are not able to get to work. It's a Catch-22. Many, many want to work.

This bill will not give them anything they don't already have. It will allow them the ability to get off of Social Security disability benefits to become taxpaying citizens with the advantage of the ability to live a full life, like everyone else.

It costs the taxpayers nothing and saves them a tremendous amount of money. So what's the problem?

I have both a personal and a professional interest in this bill. I am a person with multiple sclerosis, about to finish graduate school in rehabilitation psychology. I very much want to work. In order for me to do so successfully, I need to know my medical benefits will continue.

I also need to know I have the ability to go back on Social Security should I have another MS attack, which precludes me from continuing to be able to work.

I am not in a position of being able to start the disability process all over again. What would I live on while waiting the year it takes to get back on

Social Security disability?

Multiple sclerosis is an ever-changing disease. In my case, which is a relapsing remitting form of the illness, I can be healthy one day, and have an attack that precludes my ability to do almost anything. This relapse can happen at any time, without warning. Then it remits, leaving me somewhat healthy again. The more attacks I have, the less chance of recovering fully.

I need costly medication in order to try and maintain my health. Should I have an MS attack which is severe, I need to know I have the safety net of Social Security disability to fall back on immediately. While I am in a healthy mode, I can work, pay taxes, buy a house, a car, and live life to the fullest possible.

Please consider writing your congressman regarding this bill. I'd like you to consider the idea that every human being has the potential to become disabled either by accident or illness. We are all only a breath away.

LOAD-DATE: November 3, 1999

241ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 McClatchy Newspapers, Inc.

The Fresno Bee

June 18, 1999 Friday, HOME EDITION

SECTION: METRO, Pg. B6, EDITORIALS

LENGTH: 391 words

HEADLINE: A job for Alana;
Congress needs to remove barriers that keep disabled out of work.

BODY:

Second only to their disabling condition, fear of losing government benefits keeps severely disabled people out of the work force.

Take the case of Berkeley resident Alana Theriault, who was featured in The New York Times the other day. She is a quadriplegic because of a condition called spinal muscular atrophy. To work, she needs a motorized wheel chair, expensive medication, a respirator and a personal attendant more than eight hours a day.

Because she earns so little in her current part-time job, the government pays for all her medical needs. But if she gets the computer programming job for which she's training, she could make $ 50,000 a year -- too much to qualify for government health benefits. Her unhappy choice, is to remain poor, underemployed and unsatisfied and keep the medical benefits she needs, or take the new job and risk losing those health benefits, without which she cannot work. It's a tragic choice, one no American should be forced to make.

Legislation pending in Congress offers Theriault and thousands like her what one advocate calls "a door to the middle class." The measure -- S 331, the Work Incentives Improvement Act -- would allow people with significant disabilities -- quadriplegics, for example, or double amputees, those paralyzed from the waist down or suffering from debilitating diseases -- to keep all or a portion of their government health benefits when they go to work. Depending on how much they make, the legislation would require some disabled workers to pay part of their premiums on a sliding scale.

In those cases where the job includes employer-paid health insurance benefits, under the proposed measure people with disabilities could retain government paid services, such as personal aides, that are not typically available with private insurance.

The measure has been rightly hailed as the most significant legislation for the disabled since the Americans with Disabilities Act. It's stalled in the U.S. Senate in a dispute over cost and worries about fraud. Those worries are overblown, particularly when measured against the waste of keeping millions of disabled people who can work unemployed or underemployed and totally dependent on government welfare.

If Theriault is ready, able and willing to work and pay taxes, why would the government stand in her way?

P6/(b)(6)

256TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 The New York Times Company
The New York Times

June 17, 1999, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 28; Column 4; National Desk

LENGTH: 846 words

HEADLINE: Senate Approves Health Care for Disabled

BYLINE: By ROBERT PEAR

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, June 16

BODY:

By a vote of 99 to 0, the Senate today passed a bill that would expand Medicaid and Medicare so hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities could retain their health benefits when they return to work.

The House is well on its way to passing similar legislation. President Clinton hailed today's vote and prodded Congress to finish work on the bill as quickly as possible.

The bill would be the most significant health care legislation approved by Congress this year, and the most important measure for disabled people in nearly a decade.

Seventy-nine senators and 179 representatives have signed up as co-sponsors of the legislation, which has support from liberals and conservatives alike, who see it as a way to increase work opportunities for disabled people who would otherwise subsist on welfare.

Eight million disabled people of working age receive more than $70 billion a year in cash benefits from Social Security and Supplemental Security Income. Fewer than half a percent of them return to work, despite a 1990 law that prohibits job discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities.

Under current law, many people with disabilities must choose between working and keeping health insurance. If they take jobs and earn any significant amounts of money, they lose disability benefits and the insurance they receive through Medicaid and Medicare. But without the health care, most are unable to work.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, a co-author of the bill who induced many Republicans to support the measure, said: "It offers a new and better life to large numbers of our fellow citizens. We must banish the patronizing mind-set that disabled people are unable. In fact, they have enormous talent, and America cannot afford to waste an ounce of it."

Among the people who expect to benefit is Donna P. McNamee, 40, of Willoughby, Ohio. "I'm thrilled," she said in a telephone interview after the vote. "This is long overdue. I've been disabled since birth by brittle bone disease. I'm a graduate of Ursuline College in Ohio, and I have a degree in business administration, but I've never been able to use my education to full potential. If I went to work and earned more than $499 a month, I would lose my health insurance under Medicare."

Thomas E. Lowery, an employment specialist in the Illinois Department of Human Services, said, "For millions of people with disabilities, the biggest obstacle to re-entering the job market is the risk of losing health insurance."

The House Commerce Committee approved a nearly identical version of the bill on May 19. Representative Rick A. Lazio, Republican of Suffolk, was the chief sponsor.

Two Senate committee chairmen, James M. Jeffords of Vermont and William V. Roth Jr. of Delaware, both Republicans, and Bob Dole, the party's Presidential nominee in 1996, championed the legislation.

The Senate Finance Committee approved the bill in March, but Republican leaders delayed floor action. They wanted to know how the cost, $800 million over five years, would be met, and they still do not have a clear answer. Some conservatives were concerned that the bill would cover people with the virus that causes AIDS. And Republican leaders said they did not want to let Mr. Kennedy dictate their agenda.

The bill, the Work Incentives Improvement Act, would create several new options, including these:

*People who lose eligibility for Social Security disability benefits because they return to work would be allowed to continue their Medicare coverage.

*People with disabilities could buy Medicaid coverage even if they took jobs and earned income that would otherwise disqualify them.

*States could allow disabled workers to buy Medicaid coverage, even if the workers lost eligibility for cash benefits because of improvements in their medical conditions.

*States could provide Medicaid to workers who are not actually disabled, but have physical or mental impairments that are "reasonably expected" to become severe disabilities in the absence of health care. This provision could help people who have been infected with H.I.V., the virus that causes AIDS, but have not developed symptoms of the disease.

"This is a huge victory for people with H.I.V.," said Daniel Zingale, executive director of AIDS Action, an advocacy group.

The same section of the bill could also help people with Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis and other chronic or degenerative conditions.

Senator Phil Gramm, Republican of Texas, blocked consideration of the bill last month because, he said, it would have been financed by tax increases, including a change in the foreign tax credit for some multinational corporations. Today he said he had "always supported the policy change that will allow disabled people to continue drawing benefits when they find jobs."

At his insistence, Democrats agreed that the cost of the bill would be offset by cuts in spending elsewhere in the Federal budget, not by any tax increase. The spending cuts will be identified later.

215TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The Plain Dealer

July 9, 1999 Friday, FINAL / ALL

SECTION: METRO; Pg. 4B

LENGTH: 721 words

HEADLINE: PICKING JOBS OVER BENEFITS;
DISABLED WORKERS OBSERVE SCENE AS CONGRESS DEBATES EXPANDED PROGRAM

BYLINE: By EBONY REED; PLAIN DEALER REPORTER

BODY:

Like many self-employed individuals, Donna McNamee solicits work with an eye on her bottom line.

Hers is drawn very strictly: Her monthly salary cannot exceed $699.

Just one dollar more and she risks losing the free medical insurance her life depends on.

McNamee, like 54 million Americans, has a disability. The Work Incentives Improvement Act that the U.S. Senate passed last month could give her some relief. The bill proposes to allow people with disabilities to continue receiving government health care benefits while working. However, the bill still needs to make it through the House, and no one is sure exactly how long that could take.

For nearly two decades, McNamee, who lives in Willoughby with her parents, has had to decide if she should work full time, supporting herself while receiving no health care benefits; stay at home; or work part time while collecting Medicare for her disability.

"It's completely ridiculous that we have a policy in this country that doesn't let people with disabilities work and continue to receive" Medicare or Medicaid, said McNamee, who has brittle bone disease and is an advocate for people with disabilities. "Why isn't the government saying, 'Go work and send us some tax dollars?'

People with disabilities who receive government-financed health insurance face income limits. The monthly income cap for a single person is $699 for Medicare and $433 for Medicaid recipients. Before July 1, when the income limit was increased, Medicare recipients could not earn more than $499 a month. Medicare and Medicaid cover different medical expenses, including doctor services, medical supplies and nursing facilities.

McNamee, 40, said many people with disabilities depend on Medicare and Medicaid because it is hard to get health care insurance when they do find jobs. Insurance companies consider medical history when deciding if they should insure an individual.

"Too often, people with disabilities are forced to choose between work and health care benefits because private insurance companies will not cover them," McNamee said. "As a result, people who are disabled are forced into poverty. Nearly 75 percent of people with severe disabilities are unemployed. If this was a problem with the general population, people wouldn't stand for it."

People are considered severely disabled if they are limited from advancing, maintaining or obtaining employment because of a significant physical or mental impairment.

Like McNamee, Lionel Smith will have to limit his work hours to keep his health care benefits. In one week, he will begin work as a peer counselor and receptionist at Health Hill Hospital for Children. Smith, 19, receives Medicaid and lives with his mother.

"I think [the bill] is nice because before now, people who wanted to work were being penalized," said Smith, who graduated from Lincoln West High School last year and has cerebral palsy.

"Every time [my wheelchair] breaks down, that would be money out of my pocket, but Medicaid paid for it," he said.

The chair's batteries and motor broke five months ago, and Medicaid paid the $200 bill. Smith said that his wheelchair would have remained broken without Medicaid.

Smith's friend and mentor, Richard Barnes, said many people with disabilities are tired of losing the health care war.

"Most people just give up because it doesn't make sense to work when they lose," Barnes said. "This will be a tremendous opportunity if it goes through." Barnes is a personal care assistant at Services for Independent Living in Euclid. Independent Living provides support, education on how to interview and prepare resumes, advocacy and housing referrals for people with disabilities.

Although people with disabilities and their advocates rally around the bill, one important question remains: How it will be paid for? No source of funding has been earmarked for the program, which would cost an estimated $791 million over six years, said Mollie Conkey, spokeswoman for Rep. Rick A. Lazio, a New York Republican and co-sponsor for the bill.

If Lazio and others like McNamee succeed, the legislation could be historic.

"If it passes, it will be the most landmark legislation [for people with disabilities] since the Americans with Disabilities Act," she said. "We are not going to give up."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO BY C.H. PETE COPELAND / PLAIN DEALER PHOTOGRAPHER; Donna McNamee of Willoughby is an advocate for people with disabilities. McNamee said the Work Incentives Improvement Act could allow people with disabilities to work and receive health care benefits.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

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October 14, 1999 Thursday, FINAL / ALL

SECTION: METRO; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 645 words

HEADLINE: DISCRIMINATION WITH A SMILE

BYLINE: By JOE DIRCK

BODY:

A very subtle thing, discrimination against the disabled. Everybody is always so nice about it.

Usually, there's an element of hostility that goes along with discrimination - racial, ethnic, sexual, whatever. Somebody not liking somebody else is generally at the bottom of it.

But if you're disabled, they kill you with kindness. Ask Ted Kennedy Jr., who lost a leg to bone cancer in 1973, when he was 12, and has gotten the full treatment ever since. He has endured the "poster boy" stereotype and been portrayed as an object of pity, and he has had people fuss over him and call him "courageous" for doing quite ordinary things, which in some ways is even worse.

A particular pet peeve, he told an audience at Cuyahoga Community College on Tuesday at the school's third annual Disability Awareness Day, is when well-meaning people say something like: Gee, you would hardly even know you're disabled.

"That's like saying to a black person, 'You're the least black person I ever met,' said Kennedy. His audience, made up largely of people with disabilities, laughed knowingly. Been there.

But discrimination, even the kind that comes with a smile, is just as crippling. And for millions of disabled Americans, the biggest barriers they face are not their physical limitations but the obstacles placed in their way by society.

In the audience for Kennedy's speech was Donna McNamee of Willoughby, who knows all too well the insidious effect of those barriers. I wrote about McNamee, 40, last June. A 1984 graduate of Ursuline College with a degree in business administration, she is a bright, engaging, talented woman.

Yet she has never had a real job, never got the opportunity to begin the career that might have been. Employers are reluctant to offer health benefits to McNamee, who has brittle bone disease and uses a wheelchair, and because of her condition, she dares not accept a job without insurance. The government benefits she depends on would be yanked if she earned more than $699 a month.

And so, like more than 70 percent of disabled adult Americans, she is unemployed. McNamee lives at home with her parents and never had a chance to realize her dream of independent living. By one estimate, nearly half the adults receiving disability benefits could work, but don't because they can't risk losing their insurance.

When last we spoke, it appeared that was about to change. For years now, McNamee has been lobbying for legislation known in its current form as the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, which would remove the low income ceilings, permitting more disabled people to seek jobs and become contributing members of society.

The bill appeared to be on a fast track. It passed the Senate in May by a vote of 99-0, and seemed to enjoy the same kind of bipartisan support in the House. Conservatives liked the self-sufficiency argument; liberals were motivated by the desire to help a disadvantaged group. Since then, however, the legislation has bogged down in committee and suddenly faces an uncertain future.

Brian McDonald of the National Council for Independent Living said yesterday the House Republican leadership is preparing to submit an alternate bill that would make the funding of the Medicaid portion discretionary. Without secure funding, he said, the bill is little more than "a piece of rhetoric." In his speech, Kennedy called on disabled people to contact their legislators and demand action.

"We don't want pity; we want an opportunity," he said.

McNamee needs no such encouragement. Denied a career of her choice, she has made a career, she likes to joke, of "harassing congressmen," and she doesn't intend to stop now. This is, she believes, the most important legislation since the Americans with Disabilities Act. "This is my life," she said. "It's my future. And I'm not going down without a fight."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

COLUMN: JOE DIRCK

LOAD-DATE: October 15, 1999

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March 6, 1999, Saturday, EAST ZONE

SECTION: METRO, Pg. A01

LENGTH: 1116 words

HEADLINE: 'People with disabilities are an untapped labor pool.'
Reforms may put disabled to work

BYLINE: MARK CURNUTTE

SOURCE: The Cincinnati Enquirer

BODY:

Linda Good has no use of her legs and limited use of her arms and hands, the result of an automobile accident when she was 17.

After some 30 years of government dependence, the Hamilton woman decided to earn her real estate license. But after reporting her first $ 500 commission, she received a bill for $ 211 from the Butler County Department of Human Services.

"They wanted me to pay for the personal assistant who helps me get out of bed and bathed in the morning," Ms. Good said. "I'll pay my fair share, but it's pointless for me to try to work if this is how it's going to be."

P6/(b)(6)

Help could be on the way for Ms. Good and many of the 42 million Americans between 16 and 65 who have a disability. A Senate bill and proposed Social Security policy changes would remove health-coverage barriers and some other obstacles that keep as many as 72 percent of adults with disabilities unemployed.

The U.S. unemployment rate is at 4.4 percent, making this a good time to help people with disabilities get jobs, say many policy makers and advocates for the disabled.

"People with disabilities are an untapped labor pool," said Mary Keegan, area manager of the Southwest Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), a state agency. "They want to work, but it's not uncommon for them to say they can't afford to."

For years, many people with physical, sensory and mental disabilities have received rehabilitation and vocational training, reaching the point where they could work. Then many of them run into a wall. They have to choose between a job and their Medicaid and Medicare benefits. And the job often loses.

Less than one-half of 1 percent of the nation's 8 million beneficiaries of Social Security Administration benefits voluntarily leave the rolls.

"They make a rational decision not to work," said U.S. Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, a co-sponsor of the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999.

The Cincinnati Enquirer, March 6, 1999

Remove income caps

Introduced by Sens. James Jeffords, R-Vt., and Edward Kennedy, D-Mass. in January, the bill primarily would eliminate income limitations for working people with disabilities who buy into Medicaid. It was examined Thursday by the Senate Finance Committee and could be voted on by the Senate within a few weeks.

The estimated cost of the bill is $ 17 billion over five years, a figure Sen. DeWine disputes.

"I'm sure it's not going to be that high," he said. "You can't really get a dollar value on it because it assumes people will not be working and paying taxes."

The bill would ultimately fund programs like the one that helped Ms. Good stay in the work force. She is a self-employed real-estate agent and works out of her Hamilton home.

Project ABLE (Analyzing Benefits Leading to Employment) is a program of the Legal Aid Society of Cincinnati that provides free legal services to people with disabilities. It breaks down confusing regulations and helps people understand how going to work will affect their other benefits, ranging from Social Security Income and Medicare - Medicaid to food stamps and housing subsidies. The program also helps people with disabilities implement the work incentive plan of their choosing.

The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, which paid for Ms. Good's schooling, personal assistant and transportation, contracts with Legal Aid to provide services to its clients.

A Legal Aid attorney convinced Butler County Human Services officials that Ms. Good's start-up business expenses - professional fees, computer programs, business cards, etc. - should allow her to maintain her disability benefits.

But long-term dependence is not in Ms. Good's plans. She wants to contribute to society as a full participating citizen. She wants to work. She worked for five years in the Hamilton office of former state Rep. Mike Fox but wouldn't accept a salary for fear of losing her government medical coverage.

"For so long, everything said, 'Don't work, don't work,' " she said. "I look forward to paying taxes. My goal is to be as self-sufficient as I possibly can."

Easing the transition

Legal Aid's Project ABLE has also helped a Price Hill man who is deaf earn a bachelor's degree from Cincinnati Bible College, which in turn allowed him to become an ordained minister and full-time teacher at St. Rita School for the Deaf.

When the Rev. Robert Ringle went to work, the Social Security Administration stopped his PASS payments (Plans for Achieving Self- Sufficiency).

"That was part of my income that I needed to make the transition to employment," said the Rev. Mr. Ringle, 36, a minister at the Christ Church for the Deaf at the Western Hills Church of Christ, Covedale.

"Legal Aid took care of the misunderstandings," he said. "I could keep moving forward."

The Rev. Mr. Ringle wears hearing aids in both ears and reads lips, but because he didn't lose his hearing until he was 9, he can still speak. He appreciates the government assistance he has received and wants to give back, both as a taxpayer and in service to other people.

"I've been getting all this stuff (benefits), which has helped me get where I am today," he said at the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Institute of Christian Education in Price Hill, where he also works part time. "People tell me I do too much, that I work too much.

"I used to be one of those people (with a disability) who said, 'Give it all to me,' and there are people like that out there. I used to think there were two worlds, the deaf world and the other world. Now I know there is one world. I want to be in that one world."

Legal Aid can help

Trey Daly is the Legal Aid attorney who oversees Project ABLE.

"The whole idea is to help people with disabilities see that, yes, they can work, and they're better off working," he said. "Most people with disabilities don't have access to attorneys, and they have gotten bad advice from Social Security, or the cooperation that's supposed to happen between Social Security and Medicaid isn't happening."

People with disabilities also could receive a boost if a Clinton Administration proposal is approved by Social Security Administration Commissioner Kenneth Apfel.

The president wants to increase the amount of money a person can earn each month, from $ 500 to $ 700, without losing critical cash and medical benefits from Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income checks.

"This will help a person who is trying to work," said Susan M. Daniels, Deputy Commissioner for Disability and Income Security with the Social Security Administration in Baltimore, Md. "It has been nine years since it was raised, and it has penalized people for even the smallest effort."

GRAPHIC: The Cincinnati Enquirer - Steven M. Herppich; Linda Good, of Hamilton, a quadriplegic since she was 17, is a real-estate agent who works out of her home.

LOAD-DATE: March 11, 1999

194TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Star Tribune
Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

August 12, 1999, Thursday, Metro Edition

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 21A

LENGTH: 463 words

HEADLINE: By hiring folks with disabilities, our state can help self

BYLINE: Wendy S. Brower

BODY:

Over and over I hear that Minnesota's businesses are having a hard time finding workers. Employers are continually grumbling, "We just can't find good help."

First, the good news: Minnesota's labor shortage is due to a record-low unemployment rate. The latest statistics report that Minnesota's unemployment rate is 2.6 percent statewide; 2 percent in the metro area. Minnesota has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation.

Now, the bad news: It is projected that we'll need a million new workers in the next seven years. Where will Minnesota get all the new workers it needs? The facts are these:

- Minnesota has a total population of only 4.5 million people.

- Practically everyone of working age is working already.

- Birthrates are falling.

With our future economy at stake, there's no time for finger-pointing. Instead, we need to find solutions.

One solid solution is to hire people with disabilities.

Studies show that the vast majority of people with disabilities want to work, yet more than 70 percent are unemployed. At one time we presumed that a disability meant a lifetime of dependence. But no more. This is outdated thinking, especially when considering modern advances in medicine, technology and today's "information age." Most employers are looking for brains, not brawn.

Government rules and policies are outdated too. They need to catch up. Congress must pass legislation that will provide work incentives which include new health care options and assistance so that people with disabilities can work.

The 1999 Minnesota Legislature did its part by passing common-sense legislation that makes working economically feasible for its citizens with disabilities. But federal legislation is necessary, too.

In June, by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 99-0, the U.S. Senate passed a work incentives bill for people with disabilities. Unfortunately, the full House has yet to act.

Along with 225 others, seven of Minnesota's congressmen have signed on to its key bill, H.R. 1180. Leading support comes from Rep. Jim Ramstad, R-Minn.

He states, "Preventing people from working runs counter to the American spirit. Creating work incentives for people with disabilities is not just the right thing to do; it's also the cost-effective thing to do."

If Congress fails to pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act, we will be missing an exceptional opportunity for both people with disabilities and the state of Minnesota. We will be ignoring the potential of a growing population, people with disabilities, to lead independent lives and contribute to our economic well-being.

Wendy S. Brower is executive director of the Disability Institute, Hopkins.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: August 12, 1999

418TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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February 10, 1999, Wednesday, AM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 409 words

HEADLINE: New program allows disabled to work full-time and get Medicaid

DATELINE: SALEM, Ore.

BODY:

A new program that allows disabled Oregonians to hold down a full time job and still get full Medicaid benefits has prompted a flood of phone calls to the state Senior and Disabled Services Division.

Since January, when word of the employment initiative program got out, division officials say they've fielded about 100 calls from the curious.

"What's the catch?" they want to know.

To avoid losing Medicaid coverage, the disabled typically walk a fine line of working fewer hours or accepting lower pay than their able-bodied colleagues. If they make more than $ 500 a month, the checks stop coming.

The Oregon program, implemented on Feb. 1, reverses that course through an amendment to the state's Medicaid plan. It allows disabled Oregonians to earn more than $ 500 a month and keep their Medicaid coverage.

If there is a catch, it is that they must surrender their disability payments, including Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income, after a year if their new income disqualifies them.

And if they earn more than $ 18,000 a year, they must pay a small amount toward their Medicaid coverage, according to a sliding scale formula.

"This much interest shows that we're doing something right," said Scott Lay, who coordinates the program for the state. Lay, who is himself a quadriplegic, is earning a real salary for the first time since he broke his neck in a diving accident 30 years ago.

A half-dozen people have signed up so far, Lay said. One, for example, is a supervisor at a software company in Eugene who now can work as much as he is capable and be paid adequately for it.

The state is focusing first on people with disabilities who are already working and who have Medicaid coverage. By late spring, they will broaden to help people who want to work for the first time, said Roger Auerbach, administrator for the Senior and Disabled Services Division.

States such as Maine, Ohio and New York have expressed interest in Oregon's program. And a bill - The Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1998 - which is making its way through Congress, would implement and expand an Oregon-type program on a national level.

The Oregon Employment Department estimates that 174,000 Oregonians are prevented from working because of disabilities and of those, an estimated 125,000 want to work. Nationally, a 1998 Harris poll found that 72 percent of disabled persons who are not working would like to work.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 10, 1999

422ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Star Tribune
Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

February 7, 1999, Metro Edition

SECTION: Pg. 22A

LENGTH: 327 words

HEADLINE: Disabled can help meet shortage of workers

BYLINE: Wendy S. Brower

BODY:

Seventy-one percent of working-age adults with disabilities are unemployed, even though more than two-thirds report they would rather be working, according to a 1998 Lou Harris report.

Today, there are not enough workers to meet the needs of Minnesota's employers. And the problem is here to stay for decades to come. In just seven years, Minnesota will need a million new workers.

Where will we get them? A winning strategy for Minnesota employers is to tap the potential skills and talents of a new labor pool - people with disabilities.

I recall President Bush telling those of us assembled at the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, "When you add together all the state, federal, local and private funds, it costs almost $ 200 billion annually to support people with disabilities - to keep them dependent." (Also, let's not forget the lost revenue from uncollected income taxes.)

In order to free people from this dependency, we must untangle the web of government programs that actually create work disincentives. If you're a person with a disability, the biggest risk of working is losing vitally needed health care.

An essential first step is passing the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, which has been introduced in the U.S. Senate. It would allow people with disabilities the opportunity to work while retaining vitally needed health care. Sens. Paul Wellstone and Rod Grams have signed on. But it needs everyone's support, including Minnesota's employers.

Employing people with disabilities and providing opportunities for them to contribute to Minnesota's economy isn't just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

Minnesota has a strong work ethic, innumerable resources and the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. It is the ideal place to increase the employment of people with disabilities. Let's get going.

- Wendy S. Brower, Hopkins. Executive director, the Disability Institute.

90TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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PR Newswire

November 1, 1999, Monday

SECTION: State and Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: TO BUSINESS, MEDICAL AND STATE EDITORS

LENGTH: 232 words

HEADLINE: The Disability Institute Minnesotans with Disabilities will Become More Self-Sufficient

DATELINE: HOPKINS, Minn., Nov. 1

BODY:

Wendy S. Brower, Executive Director, recently said, "I applaud Governor Ventura for his guts, imagination, and willingness to find ways to help Minnesotans with disabilities get into the work force as part of his Big Plan. I give him credit for giving us a chance to show that we have the right stuff."

Even though the overwhelming majority of people with disabilities are unemployed, studies repeatedly report that 7 out of 10 people with disabilities would really prefer to work.

According to Brower, two things must happen:

-- First, it is critical that Congress enact The Work Incentives Improvement Act, which will make earning a real paycheck economically feasible for thousands of Minnesotans with disabilities.

-- Second, employers must assist in the design of vocational programs to ensure that Minnesotans with disabilities are truly prepared for competitive jobs in the marketplace of the 21st Century.

It is important to remember that all citizens in Minnesota have unique talents, including those with disabilities who can work and those who can't. Each and every person is a valuable asset to society in countless ways.

SOURCE The Disability Institute
CONTACT: Wendy S. Brower of The Disability Institute, 612-935-9343 office,
P6/(b)(6) home

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 2, 1999

1ST STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Boston Herald Inc.
The Boston Herald

December 12, 1999 Sunday ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: FINANCE; Pg. 043

LENGTH: 685 words

HEADLINE: Disabled workers welcome new law

BYLINE: By JENNIFER HELDT POWELL

[redacted] P6/(b)(6) [redacted] P6/(b)(6)

BODY:

Karen Foran hopes to get a full-time job someday, but the threat of losing crucial health care benefits makes that a difficult goal.

Foran, diagnosed with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis at an early age, relies on personal care attendants to get out of bed and off to work in the morning. If she earns too much money, she will lose the medical benefits that pay for the aids.

A measure to be signed into law by President Bill Clinton this week eliminates that fear for Foran and millions of others with disabilities.

More than 2 million people are expected to take advantage of the new Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 that will make it easier for those with disabilities to get jobs.

"It means independence, empowerment, a sense of being," said Foran, now working nearly full-time as a peer counselor at the Metrowest Center for Independent Living.

"It's enjoyable. It's a reason, if you like what you're doing, to get up and do it."

The new bill is not the panacea advocates had wanted, but it's a good start, they said.

"It's really a first step," said Paul Spooner, executive director of the Metrowest Center for Independent Living. "It's not going to solve everything at once."

About 76 percent of the 9 million working age adults who receive disability benefits want to work, but 75 percent are unemployed. Fewer than 1 percent leave the disability rolls to return to work.

People with disabilities getting assistance are eligible for Medicare, a federal program for Social Security recipients, or Medicaid, a state program for those with low incomes.

Medicare benefits are now cut off 39 months after recipients return to work. Under the new law, they can extend that period for 15 months.

"It gives people a greater window of opportunity to work and get health benefits," said Spooner.

Medicaid benefits are lost after a recipient's salary reaches 133 percent of poverty, or $ 914 a month for an individual.

In Massachusetts, people with disabilities, can buy into the Medicaid program once they no longer qualify. The new federal law expands that program to other states.

The benefits can be an important supplement to health insurance policies offered by employers that don't always cover expensive wheelchairs or special counselors.

States will also be able to let working people with potentially debilitating disabilities buy into the Medicaid. The hope is that with extra services such as physical therapy or reconstructive surgery, they will be able to continue working, advocates said.

Another key provision restructures payments for private vocational rehabilitation services. Under the new plan, private agencies that help disabled people get jobs will receive a portion of the Medicare savings.

The new programs will cost an estimated $ 1.4 billion over 10 years, but they could save the government up to $ 10 billion a year, supporters say.

The cost would be recouped if only 70,000 people actually leave the disability rolls, said one of the bill's lead advocates, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.). If 210,000 take jobs, he expects the government to save $ 1 billion a year.

Disability groups figure more than 2 million people will take advantage of the new law.

Kennedy said he considers the bill to be one of Congress' key accomplishments this year.

"Disabled does not mean unable," he said. "It's long past time to remove the unfair barriers that prevent so many citizens with disabilities from working and living independent and productive lives."

In Kennedy's view, the legislation stengthens the Americans With Disabilities Act.

The biggest challenge in getting the new measure passed was overcoming attitudes, Spooner said.

People had to be convinced that people with disabilities want to work and should be given the chance, he said. Then, lawmakers had to be convinced to make changes to Social Security.

Although Spooner hopes more will be done, he said he is glad for the boost.

"I think there will be a lot more people waiting to get back to work knowing that there will be a safety net for them," he said.

LOAD-DATE: December 12, 1999

4TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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December 5, 1999, Sunday, ALL EDITIONS

SECTION: TEMPO, Pg. F16

LENGTH: 624 words

HEADLINE: Measure should help disabled
Medicare, Medicaid eligibility lengthened

BYLINE: DEBORAH KENDRICK

BODY:

A piece of legislation passed by Congress last week could have as much impact on the employment rate of people in the Tristate with disabilities as the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act has had on access to public facilities and an awareness of civil rights.

The Work Incentives Improvement Act, passed Nov. 18, was proposed by President Clinton in his 1999 State of the Union address, and referenced by him in several other public speeches, has promised real opportunity on the employment front in a way that has disability rights activists excited.

The cost of wheelchairs, medications, medical supplies, and other disability-related expenses is high, and for many, the only conceivable way of covering those costs has been through Medicaid and Medicare. Most Americans depending upon those benefits know all too well the dilemma posed by the long-standing system. If you work, your Social Security Disability benefits disappear - and along with them, your Medicaid or Medicare benefits as well. Thus, many disabled Americans who want to work have been caught in the inescapable circle of choosing between health care and employment.

The Work Incentives Improvement Act brings a number of changes to the existing system. First, Medicaid and Medicare coverage will continue, despite earnings limits, up to three years beyond the time that Social Security benefits are replaced by earnings from employment. Secondly, participants will have the option of buying in to those services for an additional 4.5 years, extending total Medicaid or Medicare coverage to a total of 7.5 years beyond the time of gainful employment.

Another change is the way in which employment can be obtained by people with disabilities. Traditionally, the vocational rehabilitation system, set up somewhat differently in each state, has provided training necessary for employment to people with disabilities. For each person who replaces Social Security benefits with a successful job placement, the vocational rehabilitation agency that provided the training is reimbursed by Social Security for the cost of that training.

Under the Work Incentives Improvement Act, private sector facilities can become "vendors" in the job training and placement business. Where waiting lists are long and training requirements relatively simply, this might broaden options.

Perhaps as never before, people with disabilities need to be aware of choices. Eric Parks, former chair and current commissioner for the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission points out, for example, that, in many instances, private agencies simply won't have the cash for extensive training to make an individual employment ready.

"We, in Ohio," Mr. Parks says of the state vocational rehabilitation agency, "are second only to the state of California in the number of reimbursement dollars received from Social Security for successful placements."

A "successful" employment is a job placement which, after completing all necessary training, has a nine-month track record for providing a person with a disability with the "substantial gainful employment" rate as determined by the Social Security Administration. After that nine months is completed, the state agency is reimbursed for the cost of the training by Social Security, the recipient's SSI or SSDI cash benefits cease but, with the new law, Medicaid or Medicare continues.

To read the Work Incentives Improvement Act Bill and related reports on the Web, visit http: - - www.house.gov - jct - x-85-99.pdf.

Cincinnati writer Deborah Kendrick is a nationally recognized advocate for people with disabilities. Write her at Cincinnati Enquirer, Tempo, 312 Elm St. , Cincinnati 45202. E-mail:dkendrick@enquirer.com.

LOAD-DATE: December 14, 1999

9TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

November 27, 1999, Saturday Final

SECTION: Business Pg. 1

LENGTH: 818 words

HEADLINE: Bill removes barrier to work for the disabled
Senate approves legislation expanding health coverage

BYLINE: ELAINE SCHMIDT

SOURCE: Special to the Journal Sentinel

BODY:

One of the bitter ironies of the U.S. entitlement system has been that people with disabilities are often prevented from working, or limited to a very low income, by the fear of losing government-paid health care.

Now, Congress has passed a bill that will help them overcome that barrier.

The Work Incentives Bill passed by the Senate last week effectively expands Medicare and Medicaid coverage for working people with disabilities. The bill has gone to the White House, where President Clinton has indicated that he will sign it.

Under current laws, people with disabilities are allowed to make $700 per month and still receive full health care benefits. Exceeding the $700 mark puts people at risk of losing health benefits, or having to pay part of their insurance costs.

"One of the major disincentives I come across when I try to get people gainfully employed is health insurance," said Tim Ochnikowski, the assistant director of the Milwaukee County Executive Office for Persons with Disabilities. "Anything we can do to bridge the gap between people on Social Security and the health insurance that comes with private sector employment is absolutely the right thing to do. A lot of employers do the best they can do, but sometimes an employee has to be with an employer for a couple of years to get insurance."

Disabilities are treated as pre-existing conditions by most insurers. The conditions are excluded entirely from coverage, or may be excluded for a period of time or covered only up to a certain dollar limit. Some insurers will decline to pay for therapy or treatment that allows the individual to maintain his or her current level of function, paying only for a strategy that promises definite improvement.

"Obviously, this is not the only barrier for persons with disabilities," said Nan Upright-Sexton, program director at United Cerebral Palsy of Southeastern Wisconsin. "But at least (the legislation) takes away a major limitation. One of the avenues this opens up for persons with disabilities is temporary employment.

"Often temp employment can be what works best for an individual with a disability, depending on their situation," Upright-Sexton said. The physical ups and downs of certain chronic conditions, as well as medical or surgical interventions, can stand in the way of some individuals with disabilities keeping a permanent job.

Ochnikowski sees another advantage to temporary work. It can give people a chance to show their abilities, perhaps leading to a permanent job, he said.

Kathy Meisner, a benefits specialist with Independence First independent living center in Milwaukee, is a member of the National Council on Independent Living Centers.

"We have been advocating for the Work Incentives Improvement Act for three years," she said. "It was quite a fight, because the disabilities community has never been very united. People who are blind fight for their needs, people with spinal cord injuries fight for their needs.

"This is the first time since the (Americans with Disabilities Act) that the disabilities community has banded together."

The latest version of the bill was introduced in January 1999 by Sen. Jim Jeffords (R-Vt.). Co-sponsors included Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.).

"People with disabilities face a variety of barriers when they seek employment, including the loss of health care safety net benefits provided under Medicare and Medicaid," Feingold said in a statement. "This legislation will begin to remove some of those barriers, offering Americans with disabilities the freedom to seek the dignity of employment without the fear of losing the vital health benefits they need."

For Martha Chambers, information and outreach specialist at United Cerebral Palsy, that $700 ceiling (recently raised from $500) limited her to working about nine hours per week. Working with a counselor at Independence First, she was able to navigate the murky waters of Social Security, Medicare, Title 19 and Medicaid to increase her work week to 20 hours without loss of benefits.

"This has definitely been an issue for me," Chambers said. "It is ridiculous for someone who is willing and able to work and is trying to be independent to be given that limit on their income. A lot of people with physical disabilities just give up."

A 1999 Harris Survey found that while 74% of disabled Americans want to work, 75% of them are unemployed.

"This (bill) sounds wonderful to me because of all of the hoops I have had to go through," Chambers said. "I hope this is something that will affect me."

Meisner of Independence First called the bill "a start."

"It isn't a fix for everything, but no piece of legislation will be," Meisner said. "People are looking at this as the most significant thing for people with disabilities since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act 10 years ago."

GRAPHIC: Photo
JEFFREY PHELPS

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Estee Blackley, administration supporter with United Cerebral Palsy, answers the telephone via computer. The Work Incentives Bill expands insurance coverage for working people with disabilities.

LOAD-DATE: November 28, 1999

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The Boston Globe

November 24, 1999, Wednesday ,THIRD EDITION

SECTION: BUSINESS; Pg. D4

LENGTH: 500 words

HEADLINE: WORK BILL FOR DISABLED HAILED JOBS-ACCESS LAW INCLUDES SUPPORT, BENEFITS RETENTION

BYLINE: By Diane E. Lewis, Globe Staff

BODY:

US Senator Edward M. Kennedy yesterday joined a group of people with disabilities and their advocates to celebrate last week's passage by Congress of a bill that will make it easier for disabled Americans to work.

Cosponsored by Kennedy, a Massachusetts Democrat, and Vermont Republican James Jeffords, The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act is viewed by workplace advocates as the first bill to address the many employment concerns of people with disabilities. It is also the most far-reaching legislation for the disabled since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act a decade ago. The measure, which President Clinton is expected to sign into law next Tuesday, would award states $150 million over five years to develop programs that offer support for disabled residents who choose to work. More important, it will allow people with disabilities to keep their Medicaid and Medicare benefits while they are working.

Currently, once a disabled person is accepted into the Social Security Disability or Supplemental Security Income program, he becomes eligible for Medicare or Medicaid but can earn no more than $700 per month. If he or she earns more, government support is cut off.

The Work Incentives Improvement Act would revamp the law so that workers with disabilities could continue to receive Medicaid and Medicare benefits, even if they work fulltime. It also allows them to choose between state-funded vocational rehabilitation and private programs that link them to jobs.

The bill was approved Friday by a 95-to-1 vote in the US Senate, and on Thursday by a 418-to-2 House vote, indicating wide support from both parties.

Kennedy, who spoke at a press conference at Bell Atlantic Corp. yesterday afternoon, called the bill a "modern Declaration of Independence for millions of men and women with disabilities."

Bell Atlantic, which has a history of employing people with disabilities, is expected to increase those numbers next year.

"Disabled does not mean unable," Kennedy said. "It's long past time to remove the unfair barriers that prevent so many citizens with disabilities from working and living independent and productive lives."

Attorney Christine Griffin, executive director of the Disability Law Center in Boston, said: "This is the next step in the realization of access to employment for people with disabilities since the passage of the ADA."

"There are many talented people who could add a lot to our economy, but they are locked out of a system that keeps them from working," said Robert Reich, the Hexter Professor of Economics and Social Policy at Brandeis University. "Employers need them. The system needs them."

For many, fear of being cut off from their benefits is a strong disincentive to work in a marketplace in which the cost of private insurance is prohibitive. A recent poll by Louis Harris & Associates found that 76 percent of people with disabilities want to work, but 75 percent are unemployed.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, AP PHOTO US Senator Edward Kennedy, right, talked to disabled people yesterday in Boston after an announcement that the Work Incentives Improvement Act would be signed into law.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 24, 1999

The Associated Press State & Local Wire

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November 23, 1999, Tuesday, PM cycle

SECTION: State and Regional

LENGTH: 571 words

HEADLINE: Kennedy comes to Boston to tout legislative victory for disabled

BYLINE: By LESLIE MILLER, Associated Press Writer

DATELINE: BOSTON

BODY:

Disabled people using crutches and wheelchairs crowded into Bell Atlantic's marble lobby to deliver an emotional "thank you" to U.S. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who last week scored an important victory by passing a bill that could allow millions of disabled people to find jobs and keep their health insurance.

President Clinton is expected within the next two weeks to sign the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, a bill that Kennedy views as one of his most significant legislative successes during this decade - and one that may emerge as a key accomplishment of the 106th Congress.

"As someone who's been very much in the disabled movement - my son lost his leg to cancer, my sister Rosemary is retarded - I'm a great believer in this," Kennedy said Tuesday.

"It's a new Declaration of Independence for the disabled," he said. "It's just incredibly important to them."

For many people with disabilities, the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act promised to give them independent lives. That promise has gone unfulfilled for many who cannot work without losing their health benefits.

Medical treatment allows them to get jobs, but federal laws prevent them from continuing to get government-financed health benefits because they would earn too much money to qualify for the benefits.

Kennedy sought to solve that dilemma through a package of benefits, incentives and regulatory changes costing about $800 million over five years. The bill expands Medicare and Medicaid benefits to include disabled people while they work, and will pay for itself if 70,000 people leave the disability benefit rolls, Kennedy said.

Approximately 9 million working-age adults now receive disability benefits, according to Kennedy's office. Administration officials say people with muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease, diabetes and AIDS are most likely to take advantage of the program.

During his weekly radio address, Clinton called the bill the most significant milestone for the disabled since the ADA in 1990.

The measure went to Clinton's desk for his signature Friday after passing 95-1 in the Senate and 418-2 in the House of Representatives.

Kennedy first filed the bill three years ago, but it got a boost this year when former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, who lost the use of his right arm in World War II, testified the bill is about "dignity and opportunity and all the things we talk about when we talk about being an American."

Christine Griffin, executive director of the Massachusetts Disability Law Center, suffered a spinal cord injury in college 19 years ago.

She worried about getting a job, she said Tuesday; worried about getting health care, worried about whether she'd be able to get important supplies, like her wheelchair.

"Was this going to be worth it? Did it make sense to get off benefits," she said she asked herself back then.

Kennedy's legislation has touched every disabled person in the country, she said.

"He's been our champion. He's been our hero," Griffin said, to sustained applause.

Kennedy, apparently touched by the tribute, gave an emotional address similar to one he delivered on the Senate floor Friday.

Bell Atlantic was chosen for the event because the company is working with the U.S. Department of Labor to recruit 2,000 entry-level workers from such groups as welfare recipients, laid-off workers, the poor and disabled.

GRAPHIC: AP Photo

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: November 24, 1999

190TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Copley News Service

August 31, 1999, Tuesday 12:08 Eastern Time

SECTION: Commentary

LENGTH: 2203 words

HEADLINE: is a pattern for people

BODY:

William G. Stothers, deputy director of The Center for an Accessible Society, and his wife, Cynthia Jones, lead the new organization that was created to promote the full inclusion of individuals of all ages and abilities. Previously, the couple published Mainstream magazine from 1982 until this year. Stothers, who contracted polio as a child, knows intimately the obstacles confronting users of wheelchairs. His formal education includes degrees from the University of Western Ontario and University of California at Berkeley. His journalism career includes stints with The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star and The San Diego Union, where he served as executive financial editor and reader's representative. Stothers was interviewed recently by members of the San Diego Union-Tribune's editorial board. Also participating were Jones and Patricia Yeager of the California Foundation of Independent Living Centers.

Q. What is The Center for an Accessible Society?

A. We have embarked on a new endeavor that is called The Center for an Accessible Society, which has been established in San Diego to get the word out nationally on disability issues. The disabled population in this country as estimated by the Census Bureau is 54 million, or roughly about 20 percent of the population. Generally, issues concerning the disabled have not been covered very well in the mass media. Our center was established to try to get that information out for people. We've been going since October. We have a third member of the core team, Mary Johnson, who is the editor of a magazine called The Ragged Edge, which is published in Louisville. We are basically funded by a five-year grant from an agency of the Department of Education that's called NIDRR, National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. It is one of the prime sponsors of research on independent living issues, unemployment, statistical-data gathering, those kinds of things.

Q. What are some of their findings?

A. What they've found is that for at least a decade they have been paying for a lot of research, and the research gets done, people write a report, and they send it to Washington, and it goes on a shelf. There's a lot of good information there that we'd like to try to get out to people. With 20 percent of the population, that pretty much means that, if you think of families involved, in some time in their life everybody in this country will be touched by disability. We believe it is a natural part of life. Traditionally, we have looked at people with disabilities in ways that I think today we call stereotypes. We have been regarded as being dependent, being on the sidelines, not real participants in day-to-day life. We believe that is changing.

Q. Yet, we sometimes tend to regard the disabled as 'different' and to somewhat ostracize them.

A. It is kind of a thing that people with disabilities have encountered a lot. With physical disabilities they tend to be treated, or infantilized, as some people have said. It doesn't have

to be that way. There are doctors and lawyers with disabilities. What we can see is that with the right kind of supports and encouragement and expectations, people with disabilities can function and perform well in the community. That's the message and the vision that we really need to get out there.

Q. So your organization is trying to be a kind of clearinghouse for information. Will you be involved in advocating legislation?

A. As a government-funded project, I don't think that we can lobby. It's sometimes hard to separate the two sides because we tend to be advocates. We hope to be and are trying to build ourselves as a resource for primarily the media. The disabled community is not a monolithic community, and we know that there are differing viewpoints on all kinds of issues. I think if those are aired ... let the chips fall where they may.

Q. What are some of the issues on your mind?

A. There are three or four things that we'd like to talk about today employment, universal design, long-term care and attitudes. I mentioned there are 54 million people with disabilities. There are 17 million people, the census says, with disabilities who are of working age. Of those, 30 percent are actively employed. Seventy percent are unemployed. Most of those people would like to be in the labor force. Health care is a real issue. If you're on benefits, it's very difficult to get (comparable) health-care coverage in the work place. So people are often reluctant to do that. There is a bill in Congress, the Work Incentives Improvement Act, which passed the Senate earlier this year 99 to 0. It is in the House and has 231 sponsors. Actually, what it means is that you can go off benefits and maintain Medicaid coverage when you go to work for six years.

Q. Would this also save taxpayers money?

A. It's interesting because in the Senate there is a Congressional Budget Office report that said it was going to cost $800 million over a number of years based on an assumption that this would be such a good deal that people would, in effect, abuse it by quitting work and going on SSI and then getting health care. Other studies have been done; one by Rutgers says that if a million people went off benefits and to work, that it would add $21 billion a year in income and cut $2 billion or $3 billion in benefit expenditures as well as almost $300 million in food stamps.

Q. Is this legislation the sole answer?

A. The Work Incentive Act is one piece, but the larger issue is this terrible situation where only 30 percent of the people are in the work force. And even among those 30 percent, there are 16 percent who are unemployed. The other 70 percent have pretty much given up or never started in the first place. It's a huge issue. If we could even get 1 million people employed, over the lifetime of kids graduating from high school, for example, you would wipe out the national debt.

Q. Is the graying of America changing attitudes on this issue?

A. I think the World War II generation really fights being identified as having a disability. The baby boomers have sort of grown up with disabilities. We're not as afraid of it. We see the adaptive equipment; we're not afraid to use it. There are some broadly held negative views about what disability is, and I have seen people who are older than I am struggle to use a cane in a shopping center, and they would be horrified at the idea of using a scooter to get around even though that would give them that much more freedom and energy. The whole market for scooters arose because of people's negative attitudes about wheelchairs. The scooter is much closer to golf carts, more spiffy, and people really relate to that kind of stuff.

Q. Are there other market changes?

A. One manufacturer has produced a whole line of kitchen appliances with big soft handles that are easier for anybody to grab. There are all kinds of devices being introduced that make it easier, especially for the baby boomers who are the target, to adapt to the changing abilities. As we go through life we have different needs and abilities and roles. Society is beginning to recognize that it needs to adapt to those changes in the population instead of forcing the population to adapt to the built world. We're looking at the built world in a different way, and I think that's what universal design is all about.

Q. What part does the Americans with Disabilities Act play in universal design?

A. It's been promoting universal design, and a lot of work has been done in that area. The ADA tends to establish minimums, which is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it says you must have X number of parking places, for instance, or X number of wide stalls in a bathroom. The problem with that is architects and builders then look at that and say that they have met the need. Well, with the graying of the population, I'm not sure that the need isn't changing. I've gone to a lot of public places, whether it's the stadium or the airport, and gone into a bathroom and have not been able to use the wide stall because somebody is in there with their luggage. It seems to me that what that says is these are popular. Therefore, why don't we make more of them? Maybe you would have one less stall, but they would all be wide and anybody could use them.

Q. How do universal design features compare in cost?

A. I know that if universal design is incorporated from the beginning it adds between 1 and 2 percent to the cost. If you put access in the original design, it's cheap. When you have to go back and redo it afterward, it's enormously expensive.

Q. So while most stadiums and theaters are 'accessible,' they really are not?

A. In the stadiums the problem is you're forced to sit at the back. In the theaters, you're forced to sit in the front. Basically, you have no choice of where to sit. In a theater, you're looking straight up.

Q. How would a universal design district affect hotels?

A. Let me give you an example. Even under the ADA, a minimum number of rooms need to be accessible. For the disabled, that can be a problem. When an abled person calls up to make a hotel reservation, you might decide you want a smoking or nonsmoking room. Or you want a king-size bed or double beds. Well, there are a lot of other things that we disabled have to ask about. Bathrooms, showers, the ability to get into a room and use it. Recently we went to Bethesda, Md. for a conference, and we got in about 6 p.m. It was midnight before we were able to find a room that worked for us because there was a conference going on with a lot of people with disabilities, and there just weren't enough rooms. It makes no sense to me.

Q. You mentioned you wanted to talk about attitudes?

A. So often part of the problem is societal, individual attitudes of which the press helped shape, churches helped to shape. There are numbers of ways to shape attitudes. The attitude we want to reinforce is to expect something from people with disabilities. Expect us to participate. Expect us to take care of ourselves as much as we can. Help us get the support we need. Not more than we need, not less, but the support that we need to participate.

Q. Are you satisfied with the way the media portrays people with disabilities?

A. The portrayal of people with disabilities is almost uniformly negative, in my view. The media shows people with disabilities as 'super overachievers' or as 'bitter cripples.' And the fact is I'd like to see people in the media write about labor issues affecting people with disabilities on Labor Day, and part of that is to try to reclaim Labor Day from what I think is a negative thing, the portrayal of people with disabilities on the annual telethon. If you're an employer and you watch the telethon, and you see people with disabilities on there who are pretty much dependent, short-lived ... and the next day I wheel in for a job interview, what are you going to be thinking about?

Q. From time to time, controversy and publicity are spawned by the need to retrofit a building to make it accessible. Is that progress?

A. We'd like to see some effort put in by people who check the building plans and do the building code. We would like to get some effort on the beginning end of it because taxpayers pay those persons to be checking those plans. The disabled community doesn't want to be the enforcers at the courthouse.

Q. We tend to think of universal design in terms of cost. But as the market grays, aren't there going to be market opportunities?

A. You're correct in that people think of it in cost terms instead of benefit terms to them. Universal design is just a different name for good design, which is that most things usually are designed in order to achieve a certain purpose to be useful to somebody. If you design it to be useful to a wider number of people, then I think everybody wins.

Q. You wanted to talk about long-term care?

A. The other thing I wanted to raise is this whole notion of long-term care which I think has a possibility of being a major issue in the next election. When we think of long-term care, we think of granny or mom getting ready to go into a nursing home and not being able to function on her own. Yet, if you ask people where they would like to be, they want to be at home. Most of the money the government spends for long-term care issues is for nursing homes. Keeping people at home can cost a fraction of that. If we think about people staying at home not with nursing care necessarily, but with some assistive services well, they're the same services people with disabilities use to help them get up in the morning and get dressed so they can go to work. We have a housekeeper. I have somebody who comes and looks after my yard. In much the same way, I can hire a nanny or do things for myself. I think everybody wants to remain as independent for as long as possible. I think we should define long-term care in terms of what can enable people to be more in charge of their own lives. They can do what they want. They can be in their community where they are a benefit as opposed to ... People need and deserve choices.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 01, 1999

202ND STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright 1999 Madison Newspapers, Inc.

Capital Times (Madison, WI.)

July 27, 1999, Tuesday, FIRST EDITION

SECTION: Local/State, Pg. 4A

LENGTH: 353 words

HEADLINE: BALDWIN: DISABLED NEED JOBS, BENEFITS

BYLINE: By Chris Murphy The Capital Times

BODY:

Dave Meinert is a cook at the Wilson Street Grill, and he says it would be great if he didn't have to worry about losing his medical benefits because of the work.

U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin agrees.

The Madison Democrat conducted a news conference at the downtown restaurant Monday to call attention to the Work Incentives Improvement Act, a bill that would make it easier for the disabled to work without losing their benefits.

Meinert told those assembled at the restaurant this morning that one bottle of his medication would cost him $ 174.19 if not for medical assistance.

''If I lose that medical assistance, I can't go on,'' he said.

Meinert is a manic-depressive and a former drug addict who started working at the Wilson Street Grill about three years ago. He now works full time at $ 7.50 an hour, but he said after the news conference that doing so puts him at risk for exceeding the maximum allowable income before losing his Supplemental Security Income and the attached medical benefits.

''I took a chance, but I've taken chances all my life,'' he said, adding that working has been a tremendous boost for him.

The Work Incentives Improvement Act is now languishing in the House Ways and Means Committee. But Baldwin and the rest of Wisconsin's congressional delegation are urging committee Chairman Bill Archer to move the bill forward.

''Allowing states to permit people with disabilities to purchase Medicaid coverage and extending the period of Medicare eligibility for Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries will allow people to keep working without the threat of losing their health care,'' a letter signed by the group reads.

Baldwin chose the Wilson Street Grill as the site for the news conference because owners Nancy Christy and Andrea Craig have made a point of hiring the disabled.

Christy ''is a model for all of us,'' Baldwin said. ''She proves it is possible to have good business sense and a social conscience by employing people with disabilities.''

Christy said after the news conference that more than a third of her employees have disabilities.

GRAPHIC: Photo of Tammy Baldwin

Sarah, Jamie, Chris and Holly Truitt listen to Gov. Tommy Thompson speak at an annual event honoring families of organ donors. The Truitts donated the organs of one of their children.

Gladys Penne, who gave the organs of her 26-year-old daughter, speaks Monday on behalf of the donors.

LOAD-DATE: July 28, 1999

366TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Federal News Service

MARCH 23, 1999, TUESDAY

SECTION: IN THE NEWS

LENGTH: 1248 words

Sandy
MS Society
MN Chapter

HEADLINE: PREPARED TESTIMONY OF
T. JEFF BANGSBERG
MINNESOTA
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT
SUBJECT - THE WORK INCENTIVES IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999
(H.R. 1180)

BODY:

My name is Jeff Bangsberg and I'm here on behalf of Minnesotans with disabilities. I represent Courage Center, a rehabilitation center headquartered in Minneapolis. I also serve as co-chair of the Work Incentives Committee of the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (known as Minnesota CCD).
It is no exaggeration to say that the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 is as significant as the Americans with Disabilities Act (Al)A). Thanks to the Al)A, many people with disabilities are being offered jobs, but they cannot take advantage of those jobs because barriers remain in their way.
First and foremost is the loss of health coverage. For some, employer- based coverage is unavailable because they are self-employed or because their disabilities prevent them from working full-time. For others, coverage may be unaffordable due to co-pays or co-insurance for repeated, ongoing treatments. For those who have affordable employer insurance, coverage is often inadequate. Although employer- based insurance pays for acute and primary care, it generally does not cover specialized medications, equipment and supplies, personal assistance services and other long term health needs.
Last spring, Minnesota CCD and the Minnesota Work Incentives Coalition conducted a survey on health care barriers to employment of people with disabilities. Almost twelve hundred persons with disabilities completed the survey. The majority of respondents indicated they would go to work or increase their employment if their health care benefits would not be affected.
In addition to worrying about health care, people with disabilities often face the prospect of losing cash assistance before they can earn enough to make up for the benefits they lose. In particular, the SSDI program's "all or nothing" approach leaves many people who go to work with less money than when they were unemployed. After a nine-month trial work period, someone who has an $800 SSDI check will lose their whole check as soon as they earn $501 dollars per month. The ability to deduct work-related expenses may cushion the blow, but for many, the figures simply don't compute.
Now let's talk about the complexity of the system as it exists today. People with disabilities who want to work are faced with a maze of complicated, government rules and regulations, as well as a barrage of acronyms and incomprehensible terms. You've got your' TWP, your EPE, your SGA, your FBR and your IRWE's. Then, you've got your MA spenddowns, your 1619(b) thresholds,

your Pickles and your Iamarino's. Many people with disabilities have college degrees--some of them are even rocket scientists--but nothing can prepare them for trying to find their way through the bureaucracy.

The beauty of the Work Incentives Improvement Act is that it takes a comprehensive approach in addressing all of these problems. I'd like to tell you about a few of the people in Minnesota who would be helped by this legislation: Tom is a young man in his early thirties who is paralyzed from the chest down like I am. Tom was a pipefitter prior to his accident. His employer is willing to re-train him to do computer-aided drafting or dispatching. Tom cannot accept this offer because he needs costly personal assistance services that are only available through the Medicaid program. Current regulations require him to impoverish himself to retain Medicaid. The more he earns, the more he has to give back to the government.

Tom lives in an apartment building for the elderly and hates being on public assistance, but he has no choice under the current system. According to Tom: "Being able to go back to work and make a living as I was before my injury would be the best medicine ever out there." A woman named Deb is faced with the same issues. Deb works and has been offered raises, but is unable to accept them. In Deb's words: "If my wages increased, my Medicaid spenddown, which is based on gross income, would increase. My rent which is also based on gross income, would increase. After taxes, you end up with less to live on than before your raise...I had been taught growing up that the American Dream was to work hard, get ahead, and make a better life for yourself. But the financial disincentives for working people with disabilities make that impossible. I cannot strive for what everyone else wants out of life. I cannot afford to have a house of my own. I live in subsidized housing because I cannot afford market rate rent. I drive a 1979 van that I cannot afford to replace. I couldn't afford car payments or an increase in automobile insurance. Because of my Medicaid spenddown and the $3000 asset limit, I cannot participate in the matched savings retirement plan available through my employer. I want financial security for my retirement years."

Then, there's Charles, a man with severe cerebral palsy who developed an accounting partnership with another disabled individual. They landed a significant contract with a local school district, but can't keep much of what they earn. Charles asks: "I was under the impression that the state wanted everyone to work their way off of assistance. But, how can one do so, when the laws are this way, and by the time all of the bills are paid, we are so broke we barely have enough to buy groceries? I would be more than happy to pay my share as long as it remains a reasonable and livable amount a month."

On a personal level, I was only able to work my way off of Medicaid because I married a woman who is able to provide most of the personal care assistance I need. Not everybody is that fortunate. Paying out of pocket for my caregiving would cost over $30,000 per year. If my wife hurts her back or becomes ill, we would have to divorce and I would once again have to impoverish myself to qualify for Medicaid.

Passage of the Work Incentives Improvement Act is both the right thing to do and the fiscally responsible thing to do. It is important to remember that most people with severe disabilities who want to return to work already receive Medicaid and Medicare, so these costs are already being incurred.

Here are a few examples of potential savings to the government if more people with disabilities are able to work:

- Acute and primary care costs will be reduced for every individual on Medicaid or Medicare who gains employer-based insurance.
- Social Security cash payments to persons with disabilities will also decrease, as individuals work their way off those benefits.

- Other federal expenditures will decline as people with disabilities move off of programs such as Food Stamps and HUD-subsidized housing.

Everyone benefits from removing policy barriers to employment. People with disabilities will no longer be forced into poverty to secure the long term health coverage they need. Employers also benefit from an expanded pool of employees in a shrinking labor market. Under the Work Incentives Improvement Act, employers would not be expected to pick up more health care costs than they do for non-disabled employees.

Finally, taxpayers benefit as people with disabilities reduce their dependence on government programs. More people with disabilities will become taxpayers themselves.

People with disabilities across the country are anxiously awaiting the passage of the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 so they can go to work. Congress can't afford not to pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act this year. Thank you.

END

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 25, 1999

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THE HARTFORD COURANT

February 16, 1999 Tuesday, 2 WEST CENTRAL

SECTION: TOWN NEWS; Pg. B1

LENGTH: 582 words

HEADLINE: RIDING THE PENDULUM OF DISABILITY

BYLINE: BARBARA THOMAS; Courant Staff Writer

BODY:

For Guylaine Bolduc, life is a vicious cycle.

Bolduc, 35, wants to work, but the New Britain resident sometimes gets sick from the mental illnesses that have afflicted her since she was 21, when she was first treated for post traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder.

When Bolduc is able to work she can't earn more than $500 a month or she'll lose the federal benefits she needs for the times she can't work.

"I want to work so I feel I'm contributing and so I don't feel so isolated," Bolduc said Monday.

A member of the vocational services program at Community Mental Health Affiliates (CMHA) in New Britain, Bolduc is just one of the millions of disabled Americans who want to work, but are afraid of losing their benefits if they do. That's why she supports legislation proposed by U.S. Rep. Nancy Johnson that would help end the vicious cycle.

Called the Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999, the legislation allows for continuation of federal benefits when a person with disabilities goes to work. When a disabled person who receives Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) gets a job and earns even one dollar more than $500 a month, income benefits are lost. Medicare and Medicaid health coverage also end.

That income cap is what's keeping another CMHA client from changing jobs. "I'd like to work in a record store," said Kevin, who asked that his last name not be used to protect his privacy.

Kevin, 30, works for a janitorial service part-time at minimum wage, but he loves music and dreams of one day being a disc jockey.

Lyn Lawrence, a job developer for CMHA, said she's looked into record shop jobs for Kevin, but most retailers want employees with the flexibility to work more hours, and that's something Kevin can't do and keep his benefits.

One part of the proposed legislation would establish outreach and assistance programs to provide accurate information on work incentives to persons with disabilities. Of more than 8 million Americans who receive federal disability benefits, fewer than one- half of 1 percent secure a job, although a 1998 Harris survey found that 72 percent of them want to work.

"Many people won't take the first step because of fear and misinformation," Lawrence said. "If they could just call someone to help them, it might make a difference."

The proposed bill would also allow states to offer disabled people the chance to buy affordable health insurance through Medicaid, even if their income or medical improvement makes them otherwise ineligible. This provision is crucial to people, such as Bolduc, Lawrence said. A provision in the legislation would extend the period of time SSDI beneficiaries can continue to receive Medicare after returning to work, from 39 months to 10 years.

"The way things are now for disabled persons, if their treatment is working, and they go back to work, they get cut off after 39 months. Then they no longer have access to the things that made them get better," Lawrence said. "It would be great if they could continue to be covered for 10 more years, and if they could buy into Medicaid."

Bolduc pays her own secondary insurance at a rate of $184.26 per month to pay for her medications, which cost more than $350 a month. She has Medicare benefits, which cover 80 percent of her counseling and doctor visits. But the SSDI stipend she receives, based on her past work history, is high enough to make her ineligible for Medicaid.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO: 1 (color) SHANA SURECK-MEI / THE HARTFORD COURANT; GUYLAINE BOLDUC PLANS TO TESTIFY before Congress on behalf of legislation that could ease restrictions on her disability benefits. Bolduc is a client of Community Mental Health Affiliates, of New Britain. The Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 would allow for continuation of federal benefits when a person with disabilities goes to work.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 17, 1999

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

bozo checkout —

[redacted] P6/(b)(6) had spinal cord injury 1977— MV accident
Medicare health insurance

SSDI income — 1979 qualifies for Medicaid thru spendown —
he's all over the place.

doesn't ever work — didn't want to criminalize it — 5 years volunteer mediator — civic affairs helping implement the ~~ADA~~ — disability independance day...

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Gannett News Service

February 4, 1999, FINAL EDITION

SECTION: Pg. ARC

LENGTH: 591 words

HEADLINE: Senate urged to help disabled go to work

BYLINE: CARL WEISER; Gannett News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

BODY:

WASHINGTON -- Most disabled Delawareans want to work, but federal laws encourage them to stay home and collect government checks, a Claymont advocate for the disabled told the Senate Finance Committee Thursday.

Larry Henderson, executive director of Wilmington-based Independent Resources Inc., urged the committee to pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act.

Sponsored by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Bill Roth, R-Del., and backed by President Clinton, the bill would allow disabled people who get jobs to continue receiving Medicaid, which can pay for much-needed and expensive health benefits like $ 15-and-hour personal aides or prescription drugs.

Now, Henderson said, "People with disabilities are in a Catch-22 situation. They want to work, but if they work they'll lose the medication or attendant services they need to let them work."

Henderson's testimony was echoed by other disability advocates at the hearing, including Bob Dole, the former presidential candidate and former senator from Kansas.

"This is about people going to work. It's about dignity," Dole, who was wounded in World War II and lost effective use of one arm, told his former colleagues. "Nothing costs the government more than keeping creative, intelligent people from doing what they want to do."

Roth's bill has already attracted almost half the Senate as sponsors, including both liberals and conservatives. Clinton endorsed the bill last month, saying "Americans should never have to choose between the dignity of work and the health care they need."

Also under the bill:

-- Disabled people who return to work could get Medicare coverage for up to 10 years if private insurance is not available or affordable. Currently, that Medicare coverage is available only for four years.

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

P6/(b)(6)

CP she is in a chair —

- she has twin boys — was
born with it — she has
lived with it all her life —

She works at Sam's Club —

Medicare — Part A; no Part B
make too much money for
both — ever since
she married Joe (12 years)

lose MC if she works too much —
~~lot of drugs~~ not drug costs —
his brace —

a year — worked a Nancy's
coordinator — she would
like to work more hours —
they need the ~~$~~ $

-- Some states would be able to gradually reduce disability benefits to people who enter the work force, rather than abruptly ending benefits, a "cliff" that now discourages people from looking for jobs.

Sliding scales for health coverage and Social Security disability benefits would help create a "no fear" transition, said Henderson, 48, who was stricken with polio as an infant and uses a wheelchair.

According to census figures, 24 percent of Delawareans have some kind of disability, but only 3.5 percent are so disabled they can't work.

Henderson's six-year-old federally funded group offers training in independent living, counseling and support groups. Its three offices, in Wilmington, Dover and Georgetown, served 140 people last year, he said, adding that most faced losing their benefits if they went to work.

"A mere 5 percent chose to take the risk," he said.

Many others chose to volunteer, in order to keep their benefits. While volunteer work is fine, he said, "nothing builds self-esteem like a paycheck."

Extending health benefits to the working disabled could cost taxpayers $ 1.2 billion over the next five years. Roth has not said how to pay for his legislation.

Henderson and other advocates, including Sen. Jim Jeffords, R-Vt., also a sponsor of the bill, said it would help pay for itself as more disabled people begin paying taxes on their wages.

"Most of the individuals we work with want no more than the rest of us do: an opportunity to lead a productive life and be gainfully employed," Henderson said. "Putting people to work, where they can pay taxes and contribute to the community would be a much better use of our tax dollars."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 05, 1999

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

demo person's for SAMS club —
staffs the table for
products.

She had to cut
back her hours b/c
if her ~~she~~ she
would have lost
her benefits —

930

electric
cart

they
Even made
him

---

mostly interested
in health care.
not disability benefits
nature of health care costs
drugs costs?

P6/(b)(6)

85½

① which one
would she lose

② how many years on
MC

③ how long she's been
working

450TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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States News Service

February 4, 1999, Thursday

LENGTH: 606 words

HEADLINE: WISCONSIN OFFICIAL ASKS SENATETO HELP HANDICAPPED RETURN TO WORK

BYLINE: By Elizabeth Hurt, States News Service

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Feb. 4

BODY:

Wisconsin needs a federal law that would make it easier for disabled people to become working taxpayers, a Wisconsin government official told a Senate subcommittee Thursday.

Joe Leean, secretary of the state's Department of Health and Family Services, was joined by former Sen. Bob Dole, R-Kansas, and Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., to promote the Work Incentives Improvement Act, which Leean said would be a boon for the Badger State's Pathways to Independence program.

Pathways is a program initiated by Gov. Tommy Thompson to increase the employment of people with disabilities in Wisconsin by finding ways for them to retain their health care coverage when their income goes up, Leean said.

Current regulations regarding Medicare and Medicaid coverage mean that Wisconsin cannot do it without federal legislation, Leean said.

"Most people with permanent disabilities want to work," Leean said. "Newdrug regimens, new adaptive aids . . . and advances in (technology) make employment more feasible than ever before. A booming economy and the vast, untapped, well-educated talent pool of people make it even more important that we act to remove employment barriers now."

However, according to a General Accounting Office report, less than 1 percent of recipients of Social Security disability insurance and Supplemental Security Income leave those programs each year as a result of paid employment. Of those who leave, about one-third return within three years.

Leean said this is a direct result of federal rules set up in the 1950s, which jeopardize a disabled person's access to Medicare or Medicaid if they earn more than $ 500 a month for more than nine months. Therefore, many disabled people are not willing to take the risk of losing their much-needed medical coverage by taking a job, Leean said.

The proposed legislation, which was introduced by Finance Committee Chairman Sen. WilliamRoth, R-Del., and has 40 co-sponsors, would create voluntary state Medicaid options that would allow people that qualify for disability payments to buy into Medicaid.

She's not listed

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

$800 month MC spendown

P6/(b)(6) P6/(b)(6)

they are on a fixed income -
he's not working car accident
P6/(b)(6) has traumatic
19 years ago
brain injury
Medicare & pay out of pocket
high spendown for MC $833/ea.
~~[illegible]~~ prescriptions are
too high he's a janitor
15 - years. ~~wants~~ he wants
to go into computers -
needs to be trained

"The simple fact is that people with disabilities are often presented with a Catch-22 between working and losing their Medicaid or Medicare," Roth said. "This is a choice they should not have to make. But even modest earnings can result in a loss of eligibility."

Joann Elliot backed up this statement. After 20 years in the workplace, Elliot suffered a stroke and is confined to a wheelchair where she relies on the help of special equipment and personal assistants to perform daily tasks. She has not returned to work.

Without a job, she qualified for Medicaid.

"For me, Medicaid was a god-send," Elliot said. "I don't like staying at home. I want to get out and be productive. As much as I want to work, I am too scared of losing my Medicaid. What would I do without those services? The irony is I need Medicaid to work, but if I wok I lose Medicaid. It's a sad circle."

Leean said the entire community could benefit if the barriers that discourage disabled people from entering the workforce were removed.

"As more people work, they will pay taxes, climb the economic ladder, and reduce dependency on government programs," Leean said. "If those taxes and savings to all government programs could be taken into account, it is likely that few fiscal offsets would be needed. . . . We at the state level therefore need your help as we try to enable more people with disabilities to become employed."

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: February 5, 1999

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

wants 1st thing in
P6/(b)(6) P6/(b)(6) morning — 40 ♀ Embassy Suites ✓
has brittle bone disease P6/(b)(6)
fractures easily; goal all along P6/(b)(6)
sounds better than before college
degree business mgmt
had offer from company
she needs part-time employment —
employers reluctant to hire
her. stay on Dad's health plan
SSDI medicare — not elig
for Mcare. POTUS SOTU

financial planning

independance around the
Corner.

she has a
personal care
asst option
how —

if she
could
do anything
she wanted
she'd go to
law school.

demonstration
project →