



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

**JB PRITZKER**  
GOVERNOR

May 13, 2024

Dear Members of the Illinois General Assembly:

My office is thrilled to join the diverse group of stakeholders working in support of the *Dignity in Pay Act* (HB793). This bill, sponsored by House Leader Theresa Mah and Senate Leader Cristina Castro, represents a significant step forward in expanding opportunities and ensuring fair and equal pay for Illinois workers with disabilities.

House Amendment three to the *Dignity in Pay Act* is a carefully negotiated compromise supported by an array of organizations. The newest supporters include groups like Special Olympics Illinois, the Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF), the National Down Syndrome Society, the Illinois Spina Bifida Association, the Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities, and dozens of other groups who provide direct service and support to Illinoisans with disabilities.

These groups are joining the fight for fairness alongside long-time backers, including Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago, the Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living, the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois, and the Shriver Center on Poverty Law.

For too long, a provision in the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act has allowed for Subminimum Wage payment to individuals with disabilities by entities with special authorization, generally referred to as 14(c) certificates. Since the *Americans with Disabilities Act* passed in 1990, the US Supreme Court ruling in *Olmstead* in 1999, and numerous other strides made by civil rights leaders, we've made extraordinary progress in understanding the unlimited potential contributions, and the many injustices too often experienced, by people with disabilities in our country – especially when it comes to finding a job.

To date, 18 states (and the City of Chicago) have acted to phase out 14(c) and expand programs that increase inclusion and access to competitive integrated employment. A range of employers across Illinois have successfully shifted their focus to Supported Employment and meaningful day program opportunities – including Misericordia, the Arc, MarcFirst, Ray Graham, the Lighthouse for the Blind, Thresholds, and Macon Resources, Inc., among many others.

The *Dignity in Pay Act* requires the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities, and the Illinois Department of Labor to lead a responsible and gradual 5-year process to increase employment options for people with disabilities and phase out 14(c) subminimum wage authorizations.

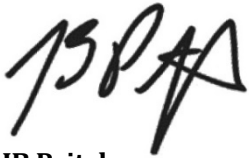
The amended bill's key changes include:

1. Extending the **phase-out period to five years** (July 1, 2029), allowing for a longer, smoother change ramp for employers and employees.
2. Creating a **Transition Program Grant** to assist employers and employees with the necessary resources to navigate the phase-out.
3. Requiring an **increase to Supported Employment Rates** to ensure providers have the resources to effectively support community employment programs.
4. Adding the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (**ICDD**) and an **academic partner** to bolster research and development efforts for a smart, well supported change in state policy.

The *Dignity in Pay Act* is one step we can take together to build a more equitable and inclusive Illinois. This legislation fosters a future where all individuals, regardless of ability, can contribute their talents and skills to our workforce and earn a fair wage.

With broad stakeholder compromise and support, I urge the Illinois House and Senate to pass the *Dignity in Pay Act* so that I can sign it into law.

Sincerely,



**JB Pritzker**  
Governor

**Pete Beale-DelVecchio**  
President & CEO, Special Olympics Illinois

**Kathy Carmody**  
President & CEO, Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities

**Marietta Coufal**  
President, Illinois Association of the Deaf

**Tim Drea**  
President, Illinois AFL-CIO

**Josh Evans**  
President & CEO, Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF)

**Marilyn Green**  
President, National Federation of the Blind of Illinois

**John Herring**  
Executive Director, Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living

**Greg Kelley**  
President, SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana

**Kandi Pickard**  
President & CEO, National Down Syndrome Society

**Kim Mercer-Schleider**  
Director, Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

**Karen Tamley**  
President & CEO, Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago

**Audra Wilson**  
President & CEO, Shriver Center on Poverty Law

**Becky Ziegler Rupnick**  
Board Chair, Illinois Spina Bifida Association

## **100+ supporting organizations:**

Access Living of Metropolitan Chicago  
Ada S. McKinley Community Services Inc. (Chicago)  
Advocates for Access (Peoria Heights)  
Achieving Independence and Mobility (Downers Grove)  
Aspire (Hillside + Waukegan)  
Beverly Farm (Godfrey)  
Bridgeway (Galesburg)  
Caritas Family Solutions (Belleville)  
Centerstone (Alton)  
Challenge Unlimited (Alton)  
Clearbrook (Arlington Heights)  
Cornerstone Services (Joliet)  
Covenant Ability Network Illinois (Oak Forest)  
Crosspoint Human Services (Danville)  
CTF Illinois (Orland Park)  
Developmental Foundations Inc. (Champaign)  
Disability Resource Center (Joliet)  
DSC [Developmental Services Center] (Champaign)  
El Valor (Chicago)  
Envision Unlimited (Chicago)  
FAYCO (Vandalia)  
Garden Center Services (Chicago)  
Gateway to Learning (Chicago)  
Glenkirk (Northbrook)  
Goldie Floberg (Rockford)  
Horizon House (Peru)  
HSS (Waterloo)  
IL/IA Center for Independent Living (Rock Island)  
IMPACT Center for Independent Living (Alton)  
Independence Health & Therapy (Woodstock)  
IL Valley Center for Independent Living (LaSalle)  
Jacksonville Area Center for Independent Living  
Keystone Alliance (Chicago)  
Kreider Services (Dixon)  
Lake County Center for Independent Living (Mundelein)  
Living Independence for Everyone CIL (Bloomington)  
LINC [Living Independently Now CIL] (Swansea)  
Little City Foundation (Chicago)  
MOSAIC (Rockford)  
Northwestern IL Center for Independent Living (Sterling)  
Opportunities for Access CIL (Mt. Vernon)  
Open Door Rehabilitation Center (Sandwich)  
Opportunity House (Sycamore)  
OPTIONS Center for Independent Living (Bourbonnais)  
Orchard Village (Skokie)  
PACE Center for Independent Living (Urbana)  
PACTT (Chicago)  
Pathway Services Unlimited, Inc. (Jacksonville)  
Progress Center on Independent Living (Forest Park)  
RAMP CIL (Rockford)  
Ray Graham Association (Lisle)  
SAIL [Soyland Access to Independent Living] (Decatur)  
Springfield Center for Independent Living  
Search, Inc. (Chicago)  
Sertoma Star Services (Alsip)  
Service, Inc. of Illinois (Joliet)  
Sevita (Tinley Park)  
Shelby County Community Services (Shelbyville)  
Shore Community Services (Skokie)  
Southern IL Center for Independent Living (Carbondale)  
South Chicago Parents & Friends  
SPARC (Springfield)  
STONE-HAYES Center for Independent Living (Galesburg)  
The Arc of Iroquois County (Watseka)  
The Arc of the Quad Cities Area (Rock Island)  
Thresholds (Chicago)  
Thrive Counseling Center (Oak Park)  
Trinity Services, Inc. (New Lenox)  
United Cerebral Palsy Seguin (Cicero)  
West Central Illinois CIL (Quincy)  
**Statewide and National Organizations:**  
AFSCME Council 31  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Bright Spring Health Services  
Equality Illinois  
Equip for Equality  
Housing Action Illinois  
Illinois AFL-CIO  
Illinois Assistive Technology Program  
Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (IARF)  
Illinois Association of the Deaf  
Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities  
Illinois Department of Healthcare & Family Services  
Illinois Department of Human Rights  
Illinois Department of Human Services  
Illinois Department of Labor  
Illinois Department on Aging  
Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living  
Illinois Self Advocacy Alliance  
Illinois Spina Bifida Association  
IPADD (IL Parents of Adults with DD) Unite  
Jewish United Fund  
Lutheran Social Services of Illinois  
NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Illinois  
National Association of the Deaf  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Down Syndrome Society  
National Federation of the Blind  
SEIU Healthcare Illinois  
Shriver Center on Poverty Law  
SIBS (Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters)  
Special Olympics Illinois  
Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois  
The Arc of Illinois  
The Institute on Public Policy for People with Disabilities  
United Food & Commercial Workers