



December 11, 2017

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Education & Workforce Committee
2262 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bobby Scott
Ranking Member
Education & Workforce Committee
1201 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Foxx & Ranking Member Scott:

We are writing on behalf of the National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC) in strong support of the Improve Access to Higher Education amendment to H.R. 4508, the *Promoting Real Opportunity, Success, and Prosperity through Education Reform (PROSPER) Act*.

This amendment includes provisions from H.R. 3199, the *Improving Access to Higher Education Act*, which NDSC supports. This comprehensive amendment contains important provisions that would benefit all students with disabilities, including grant programs on faculty training and universal design for learning.

As an organization focused on improving the lives of individuals with Down syndrome, we are especially pleased that this amendment includes the continuation of and improvements to the Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSIDs), and a National Coordinating Center to coordinate and evaluate the TPSIDs and to provide technical assistance to families and institutions of higher education. Since the creation of TPSIDs in the Higher Education Opportunity Act in 2008, individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) in TPSID programs are experiencing better outcomes in employment and wages, social networks, self-determination, and community. Postsecondary opportunities for students with ID offer a new path to academic access, social inclusion, and working and living as independently as possible in the community.

This amendment will build on these successes and what we have learned about postsecondary education for students with ID since 2008. Key revisions include new requirements related to:

- Inclusive campus housing, which leads to independent living.
- Additional longitudinal data collection to identify outcomes.

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- Recognized educational credentials approved by the institution.
- Sustainability of the programs after federal funding ends.
- An emphasis on academic, independent living and career components.
- Next steps for the National Coordinating Center Accreditation Workgroup, including outreach to accrediting agencies, field testing the model standards, developing technical guidance and updating the model standards as needed.

The National Down Syndrome Congress is the country's oldest and largest organization for people with Down syndrome, their families, and the professionals who work with them. NDSC provides support and information about issues related to Down syndrome throughout the lifespan and advocates for people with Down syndrome in matters of public policy.

NDSC stands ready to work with Congress on this important legislation. Please feel free to contact Stephanie Smith Lee at 703-938-4041 or stephaniesmithlee@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Tolleson
Executive Director
National Down Syndrome Congress



Stephanie Smith Lee
Senior Policy Advisor
National Down Syndrome Congress