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May 16, 2017

Dear Senator Sanders, Senator Murray, Congressman Scott, and
Congressman Ellison,

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) would like to express our support for the Raise the Wage Act. We strongly believe this legislation will be a step in the right direction for fair pay for workers, including workers with disabilities.

NCIL is the longest-running national, cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for people with disabilities. Founded in 1982, NCIL represents thousands of organizations and individuals including: Centers for Independent Living (CILs), Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs), individuals with disabilities, and other organizations that advocate for the human and civil rights of people with disabilities throughout the United States. CILs offer services at over 700 locations with a presence in every state and territory across the country.

People deserve to be paid fairly for their labor, and no working individuals should be forced to live in poverty. Raising the wages of low-wage workers in this country would be a significant step toward combatting poverty wages for working individuals. On top of that, it would also benefit their communities, the economy, and the very businesses that employ these workers. The Raise the Wage Act is a strong piece of legislation that is a necessary move toward guaranteeing fair pay to the lowest-wage workers in our country.

Moreover, the legislation proposes phasing out the subminimum wage. In doing so, people with disabilities will have a greater opportunity to be fairly compensated for their work. The use of 14(c) waivers to pay people with disabilities less than the minimum wage – sometimes just pennies per hour – is a practice NCIL has long opposed. Paying people lower wages on the basis of their disability is discrimination, and this discrimination is one of the factors that has led people with disabilities to experience double the rate of poverty as people without disabilities. This legislation will end this discriminatory practice. Additionally, this legislation will provide transition

assistance for businesses who have relied on 14(c) certificates, and information on competitive integrative employment to people with disabilities employed under these programs. These are important measures that will help to ensure a successful transition away from subminimum wages and toward closing this massive wage gap.

We would like to thank you for your efforts on this issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Kelly Buckland, Executive Director, at (202) 207-0334 x 1104 or Kelly@ncil.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Buckland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kelly" being more prominent than the last name "Buckland".

Kelly Buckland