

**Summary page: Testimony on Disability and Employment before the
U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee**

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Employment continues to remain very low among working-age people with disabilities compared to those without disabilities. The new employment report shows that among working-age people with disabilities, 34.9% of men and 32.8% of women were employed in January 2022, compared to 75.6% and 65.5% of men and women without disabilities. Their unemployment numbers are twice those of people without disabilities.

Employment of people with disabilities declined for several years following the Great Recession of 2008-2010, but there was progress starting in 2014 up to the pandemic, and during the pandemic recovery.

The increase in telework was smaller among workers with disabilities during the pandemic, but the pandemic may have a “silver lining” for people with disabilities over time from increased opportunities for telework and workplace restructuring.

People with disabilities face more difficulties in obtaining jobs. The reasons include: employer discrimination and reluctance to hire, low education and training levels, extra costs of work combined with lack of access to assistive technology and long-term services and supports, disincentives from disability income programs, social isolation, and social stigma.

Employed people with disabilities face a variety of disparities. These include: lower pay, fewer benefits, increased risk of layoff, greater likelihood of contingent employment, and unwelcoming corporate cultures.

Employer and public policies can help increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Examples of promising employer policies and practices include: 1) strong visible commitment from top management, 2) inclusion of disability in diversity initiatives, 3) targeted recruitment efforts and inclusive language in job ads and company messages, 4) disability training for managers and employees aimed at creating an inclusive climate, and 5) centralized accommodations funds.

Examples of public policies that deserve attention over the next few years include: 1) encouraging a strong labor market, 2) ensuring people with disabilities have access to apprenticeship and other training programs, 3) providing additional Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) funding dedicated for employment support, 4) providing resources and support to entrepreneurs with disabilities, 5) working with federal contractors to ensure they are meeting the goal of having at least 7% of their employees be people with disabilities, and 6) working to move people with disabilities into competitive integrated employment while phasing out FLSA section 14C subminimum wage certificates.