

May 1, 2023

Chair Noor, Chair Hoffman, and Conference Committee Members,

My name is Addison Loerzel. I am writing to testify in support of the provisions to phase out subminimum wage in the House omnibus bill.

I was really sad when I found out that people with disabilities often get paid less money than those who don't have disabilities. My entire life, I have had to work really hard - sometimes harder than you, and rarely get to achieve the same level of success. This is wrong.

Even though I have shown myself to be a hard worker, there is still a chance that I might make a subminimum wage because society continues to believe that people with disabilities are helpless, unable to complete meaningful work, and don't really care about the size of their paychecks. This way of thinking is false!

When a person finds a job that matches their interests, skills, and supports, you will see them thrive! You will watch them blossom into a confident, accomplished, and valued employee. And this idea that people with disabilities don't really care about money is ridiculous. The majority of us do! We want to have hobbies and enjoy leisure time. We want to go on vacation, have nice clothes, and pay our bills. What does that take? Money! Come on! Of course we care about the size of our paychecks!

What if I was your daughter? Do you think this would be fair? I have friends that are older than me and some are starting to explore career options. Do you want to know some of their choices? Cleaning hotel rooms, cleaning restaurants, and cleaning stores. Cleaning can be a great job and it is very important but what if that was your only choice? Would you like that? Would you like it if somebody stood over your shoulder with a stop watch to time your work, at a job that you probably didn't even choose, and calculated your wage...your worth (!) based on a 60 minute snap shot of time?

That is not what I want for my future...and most people with disabilities would agree. I have goals, dreams, and passions just like other kids my age. I want to go to college and learn how to be a better cook. I want to open my own restaurant or bakery and make people happy with my food. I want to contribute to my local community and economy and help others who want careers in food service.

I hope you will look at me, and others like me, and see us for our worth. Please see my strengths and contributions. Stop focusing on what I **can't** do and listen to me when I tell you what I **can** do! Please vote to end subminimum wage.

Thank you,

Addie Loerzel, Moorhead, MN