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GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 701. Findings; purpose; policy

(a) Findings

Congress finds that—

- (1) millions of Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities and the number of Americans with such disabilities is increasing;
- (2) individuals with disabilities constitute one of the most disadvantaged groups in society;
- (3) disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to—
  - (A) live independently;
  - (B) enjoy self-determination;
  - (C) make choices;
  - (D) contribute to society;
  - (E) pursue meaningful careers; and
  - (F) enjoy full inclusion and integration in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of American society;
- (4) increased employment of individuals with disabilities can be achieved through implementation of statewide workforce development systems defined in section 3102 of this title that provide meaningful and effective participation for individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities and activities carried out under the vocational rehabilitation program established under subchapter I, and through the provision of independent living services, support services, and meaningful opportunities for employment in integrated work settings through the provision of reasonable accommodations;
- (5) individuals with disabilities continually encounter various forms of discrimination in such critical areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, communication, recreation, institutionalization, health services, voting, and public services;
- (6) the goals of the Nation properly include the goal of providing individuals with disabilities with the tools necessary to—
  - (A) make informed choices and decisions; and
  - (B) achieve equality of opportunity, full inclusion and integration in society, em-

ployment, independent living, and economic and social self-sufficiency, for such individuals; and

(7)(A) a high proportion of students with disabilities is leaving secondary education without being employed in competitive integrated employment, or being enrolled in postsecondary education; and

(B) there is a substantial need to support such students as they transition from school to postsecondary life.

(b) Purpose

The purposes of this chapter are—

(1) to empower individuals with disabilities to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and inclusion and integration into society, through—

(A) statewide workforce development systems defined in section 3102 of this title that include, as integral components, comprehensive and coordinated state-of-the-art programs of vocational rehabilitation;

(B) independent living centers and services;

(C) research;

(D) training;

(E) demonstration projects; and

(F) the guarantee of equal opportunity;

(2) to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, for competitive integrated employment;

(3) to ensure that the Federal Government plays a leadership role in promoting the employment of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with significant disabilities, and in assisting States and providers of services in fulfilling the aspirations of such individuals with disabilities for meaningful and gainful employment and independent living;

(4) to increase employment opportunities and employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, including through encouraging meaningful input by employers and vocational rehabilitation service providers on successful and prospective employment and placement strategies; and

(5) to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that youth with disabilities and students with disabilities who are transitioning from receipt of special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) and receipt of services under section 794 of this title have opportunities for postsecondary success.

(c) Policy

It is the policy of the United States that all programs, projects, and activities receiving assistance under this chapter shall be carried out in a manner consistent with the principles of—

(1) respect for individual dignity, personal responsibility, self-determination, and pursuit of meaningful careers, based on informed choice, of individuals with disabilities;

(2) respect for the privacy, rights, and equal access (including the use of accessible formats), of the individuals;

(3) inclusion, integration, and full participation of the individuals;