



STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

Promoting choice, access, and inclusion for people with disabilities.

May 7, 2012

The Honorable Sam Adams, Mayor
 The Honorable Nick Fish,
 The Honorable Amanda Fritz
 The Honorable Randy Leonard
 The Honorable Dan Saltzman
 City of Portland
 City Hall
 1221 SW Fourth Avenue
 Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mayor Adams and Council Members Fish, Fritz, Leonard and Saltzman:

The Oregon State Independent Living Council (SILC) has become aware that you will be considering a resolution to make the City of Portland a model employer of individuals with disabilities at your upcoming May 9th meeting. We have reviewed the proposal submitted to you by the Portland Commission on Disabilities (PCOD) and fully support its contents, applaud their initiative in developing such and urge your approval and support. Especially impressive is the diverse strategies and activities the Commission is proposing be utilized in achieving this goal. This is a very well thought out and viable proposal.

The mission of the SILC is to promote choice, equal access, and full inclusion of people with disabilities, throughout the State of Oregon. There are many facets of achieving independence, with employment being a major foundational piece for any person, and this holds true for people with disabilities as well. But as a group, individuals with disabilities have for far too long, remained one of the most unemployed in our society. As a result, many unnecessarily incur not only the economic impacts, including poverty and inadequate housing, healthcare, transportation, etc., but also often feel marginalized, experience isolation, a loss of dignity and self-worth and find themselves dependent, for yet one more activity of their daily lives – that of earning a living. While these are the more obvious results of the persistently high unemployment rates of people with disabilities, it's also employers themselves and our communities at large

who may be the most deprived in this situation, since the workforce isn't benefitting from the talents, skills, knowledge, experiences and motivation of a whole group of our citizens.

By taking the steps outlined in this proposal, the City of Portland can/will help turn this situation around, and like a few other cities in our nation, through making this commitment to enhancing opportunities for it's citizens with disabilities to become employed, lead the way for other employers – public, private and nonprofit.

We strongly urge your vote in support to adopt this resolution.

Sincerely,



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