

Testimony of Jane Boone

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Chairman Harkin, Ranking Member Alexander, distinguished committee members and dedicated staff, thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Jane Boone and I live in Seattle, Washington. I currently serve as a consultant to the State Employment Leadership Network (also known as the SELN), a growing consortium of 27 states across the country from Hawaii to Massachusetts. The SELN is collaboratively staffed by the Institute of Community Inclusion and the National Association of Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. The purpose of the SELN is to improve employment for each state and our country's workforce with intellectual and developmental disabilities. For the first 27 years of my career I worked as a grants administrator at the local government level in Thurston and Mason counties, one a metropolitan and the other a rural county in Washington. Then, for five years until January of 2013, I managed Washington State's Jobs by 21 Employment Partnership. My career has one clear focus –developing and implementing the policies and practices needed for youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities to get good jobs with good employers at typical ages, have the opportunity to advance in their careers, and earn a decent – better than decent - living. Having the opportunity to briefly summarize the key elements in place in Washington State over the past 40 years that have led to the inclusion of youth and working age adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Washington State's workforce is, truly, a privilege.

The core foundation of Washington's success is simple. We value people with intellectual and developmental disabilities being in our lives and living as equally participating members in our communities. That is the heart of it. Given that, we know it is the responsibility of publicly funded support to promote the opportunity for all citizens to be integral members of our communities, living with status and respect, increasing in competence, expanding meaningful friendships and relationships, having access to an array of good choices, and being healthy and safe. These basic values make Washington's focus on employment obvious. The most simple and cost effective way to achieve all of the basic elements essential to a decent life - for any of us - is to support everyone, perhaps most especially people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, to get and keep a good job and advance in their careers.

Contrary to previously held beliefs in the United States, beliefs that resulted in segregating people with even very mild disabilities into sheltered workshops and adult "habilitation" centers, Washington has learned over and over again, job by job, person by person, employer by employer, that everyone is employable. Over 3,000 people with significant and sometimes very complex disabilities are now working in integrated, competitive jobs with employers large and small. These are people who were segregated and not working 30 years ago in our state. With purposeful intent in policy and in funding, collaboration amongst government agencies, and the support of employment service agencies, families, friends, schools and networking, those jobs happened one employer and one person at a time. It didn't happen overnight. With over half of Washington's workforce relying on supports from the Division of Developmental Disabilities employed in individual integrated jobs, we now *know* that the entire workforce of youth and

adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities are employable. Every young person, every middle age person, every older person, can work in an integrated job in the community, no matter how complex or unusual the disability. We have learned that exactly like for you and me, with the right job match, the right jobs supports and a willing employer, everyone is capable of working and contributing to our economy and our communities. None of us can work for every employer, but each one of us can work and have a job when our talents and skills match the needs and supports available at our job. None of us gets through a workday without some level of support from our co-workers, our supervisors, some level of accommodation, no matter how great or small, and technology. For the workforce of people with very complex disabilities, that support will likely include expertise from a job developer to get the job, and a job coach or employment specialist on the job. That is not always needed, and when it is, it's not usually much of a difference, it may include more in the way of on the job supports, job restructuring or more thinking about arranging the accommodations any of us need to get our jobs done to our employer's and our own satisfaction.

While valuing the inclusion of all people is at the heart of Washington's success, being clear and accountable to a goal is critical to successful achievement of any pursuit.

Washington's Goal

Youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Washington State will:

- **Have the support and expectation needed to earn a living wage**
- **Actively use existing talents and gain new abilities in every sector of the state's workforce and**
- **Contribute as equals in the labor force and economic vitality of the state.**

Washington Eight Essentials to Goal Achievement

- 1) **Stakeholder Leadership**, clear communication of vision, values and goal in policy and practice
- 2) **Accountability and Performance Measurement** of data on progress towards employment goals
- 3) **Funding and Contracting** methods investing in integrated employment
- 4) **Training and Technical Assistance** to support and expand the expertise of employment agencies
- 5) **Common Accountabilities and Working Agreements amongst partners** including local government, schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, employers and families
- 6) **Stakeholder and Advocacy** involvement and guidance in policy and practice
- 7) **Private and public sector employment** – government and business leadership in hiring

8) Innovation and continuous quality improvement at the local and state level, including investment in new and increasingly effective business models

National Picture: Washington has relied on maximizing every element essential leading to our success for over 30 years, and our data shows the improvement in our employment outcomes and progress towards our goal of full inclusion in the workforce. Nationally, despite many employers hiring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, despite the need for people to get and keep good jobs, despite our country's urgent need for a capable workforce, it is not yet a commonly held belief that it is possible for everyone to work, and the data reflects the lack of expectation, the lack of assumption that everyone is employable. At the national level, currently, 80% to 90% of people with intellectual disabilities remain segregated in publically funded sheltered workshops or segregated non-work day activity centers. The National Core Indicator study demonstrates that of those who are unemployed, the majority want a job, yet only 28% have an individual service plan that includes the goal of a getting a job. (*Human Services Research Institute (2012). Working in the community: The status and outcomes of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in integrated employment. NCI Data Brief, October 2012. Cambridge, MA: Human Services Research Institute.*)

How can this be, how can such a large segment of America's workforce who wants to work remain segregated and unemployed without the expectation or assistance to get a good job and earn good wages? Some of Washington State's self-advocates grew up knowing they would be expected to work, others feel lucky to have a job and see it as a privilege, especially amongst the older workforce. Typically, we think of privilege as being defined as an unusual benefit, perhaps a rare advantage or special honor. In America, a country founded on the rights of all citizens to pursue life, liberty and happiness, a nation with an economy based on the principles and benefits of capitalism, few of us would consider working or earning a living to provide for our families and ourselves as a rare privilege or a special honor. It is just what we do - we get up and go to work for a living. Few Americans consider paying taxes as a privilege; it is simply a measure of ordinary contribution in civic participation.

However, the *only* reason I am here testifying before you today is that, according to data compiled annually by researchers at the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), and data published by the National Core Indicators project, at best 20%, and perhaps measured more accurately, 10%, of our workforce with intellectual and developmental disabilities are working in individual integrated jobs in a competitive environment. Said a different way, as mentioned, we are talking about an 80% to 90% unemployment rate for a significant portion of our country's workforce. Not being expected to work and earn a living is distinctly *not* a privilege. America's working age adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities are overwhelmingly excluded from what the rest of our nation takes for granted - the right, opportunity, support and expectation to find employment and "make a living." Not surprisingly, for the most part, they are living in poverty. Poverty is not by definition an accompanying condition to disability, but

unfortunately, that is the case in the United States. Now that we know how to do better, we have to do better. The privilege of my presence here is due to what is viewed as a “notable accomplishment” – the relatively high number of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Washington State working in jobs for employers in their communities and earning minimum wage or better.

Washington’s success: With collaboration between the private and public sector, innovation, commitment from employment support agencies, and a persistent expectation and investment in employment, the integrated employment rate of adults relying on day and employment support from the Washington State Division of Developmental Disabilities has risen from just around 0% in 1980, to 53% in 2004 and, as last measured by ICI, to 89% in 2011. That may sound impressive, but we are the very first to admit that we have a long way to go until the day *every* person of working age is employed and earning decent wages. 89% is the total percentage of individuals receiving funded employment supports who are working in an individual job, or at a small group employment site. In that 89% figure are people who are working, but some are between jobs, or receiving support to land their first job, or advance in their career. The good news is that Washington has pretty much figured out how people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with relatively low employment support needs can enter the workforce and be successful on the job, but we are still learning how to work with employers so that 100% of the workforce can be working. The biggest disappointment is in the average hours worked per week and the wages earned. With only 17 hours per week as the average hours worked per week, and the hourly wages averaging just right around minimum wage, average annual earnings are roughly \$7,000 and that is very different from our goal of median wage earnings and full time work.

National Initiatives: For over 5 years, Washington has actively participated in what is now a 27 state consortium - the State Employment Leadership Network. In 2012, we also received a federal grant from the Office of Disability and Employment Policy at the US Department of Labor to mentor three states in Employment First practices – Iowa, Tennessee and Oregon. In the summer of 2012, Iowa’s team, led by David Mitchell, the Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Director, asked Washington to answer a series of questions that would help explain how Washington State has been able to achieve the relatively high level of people in integrated employment settings. That outline is summarized here:

What are some factors essential to Washington’s success that might guide us?

Washington is fully engaged in implementing an Employment First *practice*, it is not just a policy or a statute. Washington’s service system is aligned towards people with intellectual and developmental disabilities getting what they need to earn a living wage, reach their individual career goals and contribute to our state’s economy through participation in the labor force. Fundamental elements of Washington’s Employment First practice include:

- **The premise and expectation that almost all of us need to work to earn a living** - and with a good job match and effective support, all of us can work.
- **It is essential to invest in an employment agency infrastructure** competent to assess the community job market, match and train job seeker skills and abilities to employer needs.
- **Effective employment support needs are unique to the individual and can be expected to fluctuate over time and vary in intensity along with job demands.**
- **Publicly funded employment services, allowable expenditures, service definitions and billable activities** are directed to the state's intended outcome that people earn a living wage in an integrated job in the community.
- **Reimbursement and funding allocation methodologies** provide the varying levels of support needed for individuals to get and keep good jobs, and continue to advance in careers.
- **Employment services are integral to the HCBS waiver plan and Washington provides Medicaid coverage under the Healthcare for Workers with Disabilities (HWD) program.** The availability of Healthcare for Workers with disabilities helps remove the disincentive of losing medical insurance as workers earn higher wages over time. Washington relies on Benefits Planners to assist individuals to use all available federal resources in the pursuit of gainful employment.
- **Individual employment outcome data is collected monthly, is integral to the billing process** and includes data on individual wages earned, hours worked, type of employment, hours of support received, job setting, cost of support and funding source.
- **Transparency and accountability to employment outcomes is paramount to achieving the goal: Statewide employment outcome reports** based on the above data elements with report query capacity at the employment service type, age, level of support need, provider, county, regional and statewide level are available to anyone with internet access at this website: <http://www.statedata.info/washington-ddd/>
- **Employment earnings data is available from the state's unemployment insurance department each quarter via an interagency agreement.** The reports, trends and patterns reflected in that data is integral to our measurement of progress in employment outcomes.
- **Washington State Division of Developmental Disabilities relies on collaborative inter-agency partnerships with Counties, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Self-Advocate Organizations, Family Organizations, the Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Rights and Advocacy Organizations, the Workforce Investment Board, the state Department of Education (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction), University Centers for Excellence, the State Legislature and the Governor's office.** Counties and employment providers have much deeper connections

at the local level with schools, employers, families, Rotary and Kiwanis, transportation providers, and other community agencies and service providers integral to the employment success of local citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- **Employment provider evaluation and monitoring** is conducted regularly, and includes the essential elements defining measures counties must regularly review in evaluating service providers.
- **Technical assistance and training** is available through the [Washington Initiative for Supported Employment](#) and other contractors for county and contracted employment providers to gain in competency and create new business models and ways of achieving valued outcomes. Individualized Technical Assistance is also available to job seekers who are experiencing difficulty in achieving their employment goals.
- **County contracts** define and reinforce the expectation of integrated employment outcomes for individuals.
- **High School Transition to Work** is encouraged at the local level, and counties may elect to use state contract funds to foster collaborative relationships with communities and schools so youth exit school with good jobs. The DDD County Program Agreement cites as an allowable category “Partnership Project: Collaborative partnerships with school districts, employment providers, DVR, families, employers and other community collaborators needed to provide the employment supports and services young adults with developmental disabilities require to become employed during the school year they turn 21.” The [Partnership Project 2009](#) evaluation report provides more information on the state’s innovative, effective and above all, collaborative efforts in school transition to work.

Washington has been working towards supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to earn living wage jobs in integrated community settings for over 30 years, and the principles and practices of Employment First exist throughout the service system. Additional factors include:

State Legislative Role: Until the 2011 legislative session with the passage of Employment First legislation ([SB 6384](#)), the legislative policy framework for delivering employment services has been through budget appropriation language, which has consistently provided funding for employment and day services. In 2004, the division, working with stakeholders, drafted the Working Age Adult Policy and gave counties until 2006 to implement. The policy made employment the only option for working age people unless an exception was granted. In 2009, there was a significant stakeholder discussion about access to lifelong learning opportunities—more than just employment. Part of the discussions was disagreement about whether or not all working age people could or should work. The legislature did not address the policy issues and the budget continued to make employment funding available.

In the 2012 legislative session the legislature considered the issue again and in effect passed Employment First legislation by ensuring working age people have the right to participate in Community Access if efforts at employment are unsuccessful after nine months.

There is some disagreement in the legislature about Employment First. The State Senate has been almost unanimous in its support of employment. The State House has had significant supporters of Employment First and significant supporters of a non-employment agenda. In 2012, Employment First became state policy by legislative direction.

Grassroots efforts: Washington has been working on developing stakeholder commitment to the value of employment for people with disabilities; the community inclusion options it brings, the status people gain by being employed, expanding system capacity and expertise for and experienced much success. Self-advocates with disabilities are clear that they want employment first and are a consistent presence in the legislature. Employment agencies (including agencies that run sheltered workshops) have been consistently supportive of Employment First and were the leaders in changing their business models. Families are passionate advocates for employment and there are families that are passionate about employment first being wrong for their family member.

To emphasize the clarity on the type of employment opportunities the state has expected the county to deliver for the past 20 years, below is an excerpted section of the **1992 County Guidelines on Employment Services:**

The following are some of the outcomes counties would want to see people experiencing from employment services:

- *Employment in businesses that:*
 - Offer status in the community*
 - Are typical businesses in the community*
 - Offer opportunities for an increase in natural supports*
 - Offer benefits, including vacation, health insurance, retirement, etc.*
 - Offer the opportunity for wages that support economic self-sufficiency*

- *Jobs that contain elements of upward mobility, including:*
 - Opportunity for advancement*
 - Increased wages*
 - Opportunities for new employment*

- *Choices for individuals in:*
 - The work they do*
 - Who provides the support*

- Location of the job*
- Hours worked*

- *Opportunities for relationships and support from co-workers who are not labeled disabled.*

- *Supports that provide culturally competent services to individuals and their families, and demonstrate a value for diversity and*

- ***Opportunities for everyone that wants a job to have a job.***

Real change relies on believing that it can happen and must happen and the determination to see it through. At what point in time did people in Washington accept (realize, buy in, understand) that individuals with significant and intellectual disabilities can work in good jobs, contribute to the general labor force and earn a living wage?

Not surprisingly, some of the strongest initial opponents have become the strongest advocates, especially among family members, but also among legislators, county coordinators, employers, boards of directors, sheltered workshop CEO's and school districts who have realigned their services and curriculums towards the realization of integrated community employment for the state's labor force with the most significant intellectual and developmental disabilities. For every would be opponent, there is likely a different story behind why they became a strong advocate, but almost to a person have in common knowing or employing one or more students or adults with a significant disability who may have once been in a segregated setting - and who are now working successfully in a job in the community. Large, medium and small employers hire individuals statewide, in rural, urban and metropolitan areas. Minimum wage in Washington is just over \$9 an hour, but many employees make more, and some have excellent job benefits.

Employment in community jobs is becoming more and more what is typical for people with significant disabilities in Washington and less and less the exception. It has taken a few generations to get to this point, and it may take at least one more to realize employment rates and earnings for the labor force with intellectual and developmental disabilities at levels typical for the general population.

Historically, on a national level, before [Marc Gold](#) introduced systematic instruction techniques in the late 1960s, there were few people, (outside of family members working in family businesses or who had a very strong work ethic and had helped their sons and daughters get a job) who believed people with a significant intellectual disability could work. Tom Bellamy, at the University of Oregon in the 1970's and 1980's, with the development of the Specialized Training Program, continued to build on the premise of systematic instruction, making it clear

that the capability of individuals could be greatly enhanced by the competency of their employment specialists. National leaders came early and often to Washington State, and directly contribute to Washington's success, most notably including David Mank, John Butterworth and Rich Luecking, John and Connie Lyle O'Brien and Washington State's 45 year fearless leader and force of nature, Linda Rolfe. [Michael Callahan](#) and his colleagues at Employment for All advanced the concepts of systematic instruction further through their tireless work in customized employment, placing an increased emphasis on the importance of coupling systematic instruction with job placement that meets both the employer's needs and the job seeker's unique interests, abilities and non-negotiable job requirements.

Informally, the expectation that everyone can work, and the message that thousands of Washingtonians with significant disabilities are working, is reinforced every day by employers who continue to hire, and employees who continue to work, be promoted, and advance in their careers. It is further reinforced in the state's school districts that have entered into collaborative agreements with counties, DVR and community employment providers to assist students age 18-21 to get jobs and graduate with positive post-school outcomes competitively employed. The Washington Initiative for Supported Employment provides reinforcement by maintaining an ever-growing collection of employment success stories hosted at the You Tube website: <http://www.youtube.com/user/WiSeMovies> .

At the most basic level, the expectation of employment in community jobs is likely reinforced best by the presence and participation of citizens with significant disabilities on the bus on their way to work, in the office interacting with customers, on job sites with co-workers, at family gatherings, parties and in casual conversation when a person with a significant disability answers the question "What do you do?" by talking about her or his job.

Washington employment providers have banded together under the [Community Employment Alliance](#) to support each other to be ever more successful in the mission of supporting all individuals in Washington to work in good jobs. The Washington Initiative for Supported Employment uses social media to get the word out, and continues to produce and collect video and spoken testimonials and publishes them on their website.

What difference has the policy towards employment made in Washington? Since Washington has been working toward integrated employment since the early 1980's by the time the Working Age Adult policy was adopted in 2006, Washington Division of Developmental Disabilities did not have a large investment in Day Habilitation centers or a large number of segregated employment service providers. Many of the former sheltered workshop agencies have been at the forefront of the positive changes, and most have either transformed their business model entirely to one of assisting individuals to work in supported employment, or have a

smaller population of people receiving prevocational services as they continue to work towards integrated employment.

To illustrate the impact the policy has had over time, between July of 2007 and July of 2011, there was a 33% decline in the numbers of people in segregated PreVocational Service settings and a 28% increase in numbers of people receiving support in Individual Employment Services:

- July of 2007, 809 clients in PreVocational and 3,044 in Individual Employment Services
- July of 2011, 541 clients in PreVocational and 4,170 in Individual Employment Services

Washington DDD relies on a strong partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and invests in staff competencies. Community Rehabilitation Providers (employment supports and service agencies) serving more than 20 clients are required to have CARF accreditation and meet their staff competency criteria. Agencies keep track of employee training in personnel records, Counties track agency provider compliance with training requirements through their monitoring activities.

Why is data collection and accountability critical? Simply put, you get what you measure: The data is used to demonstrate:

- employed people use fewer resources to maintain employment
- employed people like their jobs; show up and are good employees
- employed people can earn good wages;
- it costs more to find jobs for people of high employment support need than it does for people of low and medium employment support need
- there are lots of jobs people with developmental disabilities can do;
- there are lots of employers that like the work ethic demonstrated by workers with disabilities
- successful job finding involves knowing the person, knowing the job market, assessing work flow in businesses and being able to connect the right person with the right job
- more jobs are available when employment agencies focus on employer interests such as good employees that improve employer's bottom line and do not regard employment as the employer's civic duty.

We are not there yet, but Washington is making progress. We have learned by paying close attention to the data we collect, data that merges our publicly funded service billings (primarily

CMS Medicaid funded services), with employment outcome reporting, that dramatic results can occur when values line up with leadership, and the message is a clear investment in employment.

On June 7, 2012, Governor Christine Gregoire signed the state’s “Employment for All” legislation, which received national recognition. Many advocates, families, employers, employment agencies, county and state government stakeholders were at the signing ceremony to celebrate. But June 7, 2012, was also a celebration of over 40 years of working towards that day. Washington was the first state in the nation with parents lobbying successfully to pass HB 90 in 1971, Washington’s Education for All bill. It was not until 1975 that a similar bill was passed at the federal level. It is likely no coincidence that our integrated employment rates are now the highest in the nation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Many of these same parents, who expected their sons and daughters to go to school with their sisters and brothers, also expected them to work, have a career, pay taxes, and earn a living. These families know they are capable of contributing to their communities. Washington has sustained the commitment to integration and inclusion begun by parents in the 1960s because integrated and inclusive employment for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities – just as it is for anyone - proves to be the best way to achieve the greatest level of personal development and economic self-sufficiency.

What is happening nationally with the federal investment? We know that the most effective way out of poverty is not by relying on welfare. Being reliant on a government check is risky business and the pay is lousy at the individual level, but collectively, as a nation, it is very expensive and costly. The average social security check issued to a person with a disability puts their earnings far below the federal poverty level, yet Medicaid funding has reached crisis proportions. Not one of us wants federal funding to result in people living in poverty, be unemployed, or earn less than minimum wage, but this is what the majority of our country’s Medicaid investment in day and employment supports is buying for our workforce of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Researchers ICI began in 1988 to annually collect national investment and outcome data at the individual state level.

The ICI data continues to demonstrate, year after year, that our country pays more for people with intellectual disabilities to remain segregated in sheltered workshops, or not work at all, than it invests in the supports needed for them to join America’s workforce, earn a living wage, be a tax-paying citizen, and gain in competence, friendships, status and relationships.

States are doing what they can to improve employment opportunities and outcomes. In addition to the initiative at the National Governors Association, several states are working towards or adopting what is known as “Employment First” policies and states have access to the US Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy’s leadership. More than half the states in our nation currently belong to a consortium referred to earlier as the State Employment

Leadership Network (SELN). The SELN is staffed by ICI at UMass/Boston and the National Association of Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. The mission of the State Employment Leadership Network is to improve employment outcomes through a series of well thought out strategies, technical assistance, webinar training, data briefs and on-site training and support. But state leadership is not enough, federal policies need to clearly direct funding and construct legislation supporting the expectation and opportunity of typical living wage employment for all Americans with intellectual disabilities. We have a long way to go to get there, but we are a country with a history of figuring out how to do better and how to innovate. We are a country capable of changing business models to achieve effective practices.

Perhaps most importantly, we are a country capable of including and valuing Americans we once shunned. In 1975, Congress passed the legislation allowing every child the right to a public education, P1 94-142, now authorized as IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. If almost 40 years ago, Congress could pass legislation allowing every child the right to go to school along with their sisters and brothers, isn't it time they now be *employed* along with their sisters and brothers, community members and neighbors? Data shows us this is not the case for the majority of students exiting school, but this is where we need to start – with youth getting typical jobs at typical ages. We need to include students with intellectual disabilities in our country's excellent career and technical education classes in high school, not just in special education. Even with a strong emphasis on effective transition principles in IDEA, and with data collected on post-school outcomes, the national data ICI collects demonstrates that in most states, the overwhelming majority of adults with intellectual disabilities are in segregated sheltered workshops or day habilitation centers. Washington State's Jobs by 21 Partnership Project demonstrated that with effective collaboration between counties, schools, supported employment agencies, Vocational Rehabilitation and employers during the critical ages of 18 and 21, youth can exit school with jobs. The data also demonstrated that the most likely indicator of a young adult's ability to have a job after school was his or her job status at the time of school exit. Students need to be working and have a resume to remain working and advance in their careers and wage earning potential after exiting school.

What can the Federal Government do to provide leadership?

The federal statutes and federal money are not currently aligned in a way that we are collaboratively accountable to employment outcomes for youth or adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There is no place to identify what we expect of the different systems, Employment and Training Administration, Vocational Rehabilitation, Education and Medicaid, where we are collectively accountable to the same set of goals and reasonable outcomes of employment. We are not working together, we are not leveraging funding and opportunities and we are not holding ourselves accountable to the outcome of employment. We need to invest in employment, develop cross agency accountability, judge agencies similarly and make employment the most attractive support states can offer this workforce. To embark on the

generation that will change the landscape of employment for generations to come, we need statutory change that effectively support students with the most significant disabilities who are the most difficult to support so that every federal agency is held accountable to youth earning a good job and a good wage. If our country aligns its federal resources and accountability to insure that youth with the most significant and complex disabilities will be expected and supported to work at a real job and earn real wages, we will have this problem solved in two generations.

To close, I have chosen to share just two brief stories that illustrate better than any statistic why federal investments need to be redirected to support integrated, living wage employment, and why funding for people to be segregated, day in and day out in habilitation centers, and not working, is not acceptable.

From the over 3,000 compelling stories about people working in individual, integrated employment in Washington State today, I cite these two, one each from the public and private sectors. The first story is from the “early days”. Along with developing jobs in the private sector, in large and small businesses, Washington began developing jobs in the public sector jobs in the 1980’s. One of the first public sector jobs specifically carved out was in Olympia, Washington, an Office Trainee job, a job primarily requiring numerical and alphabetical filing. Several people with developmental disabilities applied for the job, and Bruce got it. On Friday, Bruce left his job at the segregated sheltered workshop, where he had worked for many years microfilming state records for archives. Like others at the workshop, Bruce was paid there based on productivity, and he legally earned a subminimum wage. His monthly earnings in the late 1980s averaged approximately \$150 a month. On the following Monday, when he began work for his new employer, his starting salary earned him a little over \$1,400 a month, with full holiday, sick, dental, vacation and retirement benefits. Bruce was the same guy in both jobs, with the same reliable work habits, same cheerful can do attitude, the same basic skills. He needed some support to learn his way around the new job, and along with everyone else, his job duties with the state shifted over time, but from the first day on the job he didn’t need any help engaging in elevator banter with his coworkers about the Seattle Mariners or the Seahawks. Asked if he wanted to go back to his old job at the sheltered workshop, he said “No way. I like my paycheck. I have new friends here. Besides what would they do without me? The filing would pile up.”

Second story: I live in Seattle where Microsoft is a major employer, with about 40,000+ employees in the Puget Sound region and 97,000+ worldwide. Standing on the corner with a morning cup of coffee, waiting for the Microsoft Connector transit shuttle to the Redmond Microsoft campus, says pretty clearly that you are rolling with the in crowd. You work for Microsoft. If Dan Thompson were alive today, and speaking before you, you would learn within the first 10 minutes that he worked for Microsoft. Dan Thompson’s mother, Margaret-Lee Thompson said, "If you can find something people do well, you can connect them with a good job." Dan was good at putting things in the right place and he liked to read. Microsoft's mailroom was a good fit, and he was the most accurate and fastest sorter. “I like my job” Dan said, “I work for Bill.”

Dan Thompson was like many people working for Microsoft, they are the best at what they do, and they appreciate having a connection with Bill Gates. What was different about Dan is not that he was born with Down syndrome or an accompanying medical condition; it was Dan's family's expectation that he be included and contribute at home, at church, and at school. If Dan's family had expected less, or if he lived in another state, Dan may have spent the rest of his days segregated from the community, playing BINGO, or maybe watching television in a habilitation center. But Dan was a Thompson family member, and Dan never set foot in a sheltered workshop. Dan went to work at Microsoft, where he was as included and valued at work as he was at home. The day after Dan died, the Microsoft campus flag was lowered to half-mast. If they were here today, Dan's parents, Margaret-Lee and Lorin Thompson, might add that what Dan loved best was having enough money saved from his earnings to give gifts, to contribute to the happiness of his family. His parents would definitely tell you that Dan having a good paying job with a great employer was not only the best thing for Dan, but for Dan's family. It went pretty well for Microsoft, too, he worked there for 14 ½ well-paid years.

As I close, I must say that even as I speak to our successes, the fact that Washington's data, statistics and stories, are viewed as amongst the best in the nation, simply serves to underscore the most painful aspect of my testimony. More people with intellectual disabilities in Washington State may be working and for the most part earning better wages than elsewhere in the country, but the average annual earnings are still significantly below the federal poverty level. Most people are not yet working full time, they are not yet earning median wage. Too many are unemployed and most are underemployed. If Washington State's employment rates and earning for this capable sector of America's workforce is the best in the country, we have reason to be ashamed, but we can struggle with shame only briefly. People relying on us for support need us to act immediately, to take every opportunity before us, in legislation and in policy, in funding directives and in leadership, to expect better, to do better, to hold ourselves and each other accountable, and to do it now. I trust that as I testify before you today, you will do what you can to align the support, policies and legislation needed for everyone of working age to participate in America's workforce, to earn median wage, to pay taxes. I trust you will put into motion the leadership needed for us to become a country where the question asked of every person of working age is not "Do you have the rare privilege of working?" it is simply "Will you tell me about your job so I can get to know you a little better?"

For more information you may contact JaneBoone@comcast.net , or the Washington State Division of Developmental Disabilities at <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ddd/>

Washington's Jobs by 21 Partnership Project – effective school to work practices:

- 1) AIDD journal article: *Jobs by 21 Partnership Project Report: Impact of Cross Systems Collaboration on Employment Outcomes of Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities* (Winsor, Butterworth, Boone, August 2011) is in the attached PDF
- 2) [2008 Jobs by 21 Partnership Project Evaluation](#) Report by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) – click on hyperlink to read
- 3) [2009 Jobs by 21 Partnership Project Evaluation](#) Report by ICI: click on hyperlink to read

For the national picture, the best reference is the invaluable [“State Data: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes”](#). That gives an annualized state by state picture of federal, state and local funding investment and employment outcomes for adults with disabilities. The book is arranged in alphabetical order by state, and as such, Washington’s data is near the end. While states pay attention to, track and report on data slightly differently, the national context is very helpful.

For Washington specific data, the best place to produce reports on the state’s outcomes is via the interactive website: [Washington DDD Employment Supports Information System](#). Washington’s data and billing system are integrated into one reporting system, and this ICI developed website serves as the outcomes reporting mechanism available to anyone with internet access. Once the query variables are entered, the report shows either by trend or summary the number of Washington State Division of Developmental Disabilities clients employed statewide, by region, by county, and by employment provider, by level of employment support need, residence, and type of support received.

ICI publication: [Innovations in Employment Supports: Washington State's Division of Developmental Disabilities](#)

Research to Practice 33a

As evidence of the positive outcomes associated with integrated employment develops it is important to identify policy and practices at the state level that expand access to employment opportunity. This brief presents findings from Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) case study research focused on state agencies that support individuals with developmental disabilities.

ICI Publication: [High-Performing States in Integrated Employment](#)

Research to Practice 32

Despite recent improvements, community employment outcomes vary widely across states. This report highlights successful practices of states that were identified as "high performers" in integrated employment for people served by state MR/DD agencies.

- 1) Butterworth, et al, University of Massachusetts/Boston Institute of Community Inclusion. [2011 State Data, the National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes](#).
- 2) Winsor, Butterworth, Boone, Jobs by 21 Partnership Project: Impact of Cross-System Collaboration on Employment Outcomes of Young Adults With Developmental Disabilities, AIDD
- 3) Washington State Comprehensive Employment Report, 2010: Washington Initiative for Supported Employment (attached to testimony)

- 4) Human Services Research Institute (2012). Working in the community: The status and outcomes of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in integrated employment. NCI Data Brief, October 2012. Cambridge, MA: Human Services Research Institute. (attached to testimony)