



## STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities & Hospitals

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

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March 1, 2021

The Honorable Anastasia P. Williams, Chairwoman  
House Committee on Labor  
State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

**RE: 2020 – H 5851 - ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS  
– MINIMUM WAGES**

Dear Chairwoman Williams:

I write to support H 5851 which would repeal § 28-12-9 of the Rhode Island General Laws, which provides that the director of the department of labor and training may approve wages below the minimum wage for those persons whose earning capacity is impaired due to physical or mental disability.

In October 2018, Accenture, in partnership with the [American Association of People with Disabilities](#) (AAPD) and [Disability:IN](#), released “[Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage](#),” a report that revealed that companies that embrace best practices for employing and supporting people with disabilities in their workforces consistently outperform their peers, including having, on average, 28 percent higher revenue, double the net income and 30 percent higher economic profit margins.

Employment means equality. The National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS) [State Employment Leadership Network](#) advocates for equal pay by explaining: *At its core, employment for us simply means a person working at an individual job in a local business, as part of the general workforce, earning the prevailing wage. All employees are on the business’s payroll, and everyone gets paid the same way. Earning wages at and above minimum wages provides opportunity for individuals to become more financially self-sufficient, to build assets, and to lead more independent lives.* We wholeheartedly agree.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A. Kathryn Power  
Acting Director

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Labor  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House