

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 817

Designating the week beginning September 8, 2024, as “National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2024

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. WARREN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Ms. SMITH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating the week beginning September 8, 2024, as “National Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week”.

Whereas direct care workers, including direct support professionals, personal assistants, personal attendants, in-home support workers, and paraprofessionals, are key to providing publicly funded, long-term support and services for millions of individuals with disabilities;

Whereas direct support professionals provide essential services that ensure that all individuals with disabilities are—

- (1) included as a valued part of the communities in which those individuals live;
- (2) supported at home, at work, and in the communities of the United States; and

(3) empowered to live with the dignity that all people of the United States deserve;

Whereas, by fostering connections between individuals with disabilities and their families, friends, and communities, direct support professionals ensure that individuals with disabilities thrive and provide an alternative to institutional care;

Whereas direct support professionals build close, respectful, and trusting relationships with individuals with disabilities and provide a broad range of personalized support to those individuals, including—

(1) helping individuals make person-centered choices;

(2) assisting with personal care, meal preparation, medication management, and other aspects of daily living;

(3) assisting individuals in accessing the community and securing competitive, integrated employment;

(4) providing transportation to school, work, religious, and recreational activities;

(5) helping with general daily affairs, such as assisting with financial matters, medical appointments, and personal interests; and

(6) assisting individuals in the transition to living in the communities of their choice;

Whereas there is a critical and increasing shortage of direct support professionals throughout the United States, a crisis that was exacerbated by the COVID–19 pandemic, bringing uncertainty and risk to individuals with disabilities;

Whereas direct support professionals do not have their own Standard Occupational Classification for the purposes of

Federal data collection, including data produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor;

Whereas the Director of the Office of Management and Budget should, as part of the current revision of the Standard Occupational Classification system, consider establishing a separate code for direct support professionals as a healthcare support occupation;

Whereas the direct care workforce, including direct support professionals, is expected to be among the fastest growing occupations in the United States;

Whereas many direct support professionals—

(1) may be the primary financial providers for their families;

(2) are hardworking, taxpaying citizens who provide a critical service in the United States; and

(3) continue to earn low wages, receive inadequate benefits, and have limited opportunities for advancement, resulting in high turnover and vacancy rates that adversely affect the quality of support, safety, and health of individuals with disabilities; and

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, 527 U.S. 581 (1999)—

(1) recognized the importance of the deinstitutionalization of, and community-based services for, individuals with disabilities; and

(2) held that, under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), a State must provide person-centered, community-based service options to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

1 (1) designates the week beginning September 8,
2 2024, as “National Direct Support Professionals
3 Recognition Week”;

4 (2) recognizes the dedication and vital role of
5 direct support professionals in enhancing the lives of
6 individuals with disabilities;

7 (3) appreciates the contribution of direct sup-
8 port professionals in supporting individuals with dis-
9 abilities in the United States and the families of
10 those individuals;

11 (4) commends direct support professionals for
12 being integral to the provision of long-term support
13 and services for individuals with disabilities;

14 (5) acknowledges the nearly 2,000 comments
15 regarding supporting the inclusion of a Standard
16 Occupational Classification category for direct sup-
17 port professionals; and

18 (6) finds that the successful implementation of
19 public policies affecting individuals with disabilities
20 in the United States can depend on the dedication
21 of direct support professionals.

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