



December 18, 2024

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Chairman, Health, Education, Labor &
Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
Ranking Member, Education, Labor &
Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Please Prioritize Final Consideration & Approval of the U.S. House-passed Think Differently Database Act

Dear Senators Schumer, McConnell, Sanders, and Cassidy:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Task Force respectfully ask that you prioritize U.S. Senate consideration and approval of the Think Differently Database Act (H.R. 670). The bipartisan legislation, which was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on December 17th, would help increase awareness of state caregiving options available for individuals with disabilities.

CCD is the nation's largest coalition of national disability organizations. The LTSS Task Force addresses the services and supports that enable individuals with disabilities of all ages to live in their homes and communities.

Many individuals with disabilities utilize Medicaid-funded Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) to assist with a wide array of supports, from assistance with their activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, using the bathroom, getting in and out of bed, and eating, to supporting individuals through skill-building activities to promote independence and community inclusion. States use Medicaid waiver authorities to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities who prefer to receive their long-term care services and supports in their home or community. These services are essential for individuals with disabilities to live, learn, work, and participate in their communities.

In addition to challenges in finding and retaining caregivers, individuals with disabilities often struggle to even know and understand what caregiving options are available in their state. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service (CMS), 47 states and DC operate at

least one 1915(c) waiver,¹ with more than 250 active HCBS waiver programs nationwide.² Online information about state caregiving services can be “hard-to-find, confusing, inconsistent, and not consumer-oriented,” as one recent caregiving report found.³

The Think Differently Database Act would help address the challenge many individuals with disabilities face in understanding their caregiving options by requiring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to create an online clearinghouse of state caregiving services and programs. This publicly available website would feature eligibility requirements, available services, waitlist duration, and other critical information about state caregiving services, including Medicaid waiver and buy-in programs. The legislation would require that this information be updated periodically and searchable by geographic area.

Final passage of this legislation would help address the common caregiving challenge faced by many individuals with disabilities in not knowing about existing caregiving options. We respectfully ask that you fast-track consideration of this legislation in the final days of the 118th Congress.

Sincerely,

Access Ready
American Association on Health and Disability
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
Amputee Coalition
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Autism Speaks
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Cure SMA
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)
Epilepsy Foundation
Huntington's Disease Society of America
Justice in Aging
Lakeshore Foundation
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)
National Health Council
National Health Law Program
National Respite Coalition
Paralyzed Veterans of America
TASH

¹ Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Service, <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/home-community-based-services-authorities/index.html>

² <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/home-community-based-services/home-community-based-services-authorities/home-community-based-services-1915c/index.html>

³ Cure SMA Stuck Inside Caregiving Report, https://www.curesma.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Advocacy_Report_Stuck_Inside_vFnl_Web.pdf