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October 23, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Senate Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Senate Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor and Pensions  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Subcommittee on Employment and  
Workforce Safety  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Johnny Isakson  
Subcommittee on Employment and  
Workforce Safety  
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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Dear Senators Harkin, Alexander, Murray, and Isakson:

I write today on behalf of the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities (NASUAD), to thank you for your leadership in crafting a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Workforce Investment Act of 2013 (S. 1356).

NASUAD represents the 56 officially designated state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities. Each of our members oversees the implementation of the OAA, and many also serve as the operating agency in their state for Medicaid waivers that serve older adults and individuals with disabilities. Together with our members, we work to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering home and community based services and supports for people who are older or have a disability, and their caregivers.

More than a decade overdue for reauthorization, WIA was designed facilitate increased coordination among federal workforce development and related programs. The proposed changes in S. 1356 represent a bipartisan effort to strengthen the law, through enhanced employment opportunities, research, and independent living services.

In particular, NASUAD supports the bill's inclusion of the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act, which would move the Independent Living Program from the Department of Education to the Department of Health and Human Services by establishing an Independent Living Administration within the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Such a change would better coordinate and emphasize the importance of independent living and disability-related research in the agency that is best equipped to guide those efforts, ACL.

With the goal of strengthening WIA and improving the lives of the individuals with disabilities it serves, we urge the Senate to bring S. 1356 to the floor. Thank you again for your vital leadership and dedication. We look forward to working together to reauthorize WIA in a meaningful, bipartisan way.

Sincerely,

Martha Roherty  
Executive Director