

On July 14 2016, Representatives Chris Van Hollen (D-MD-08) and Cathy Mc Morris Rodgers (R-WA-05), along with a bipartisan group of colleagues, introduced H.R. 5903, The Transition to Independence Act. The aim of the legislation is to have fewer people with disabilities working in segregated environments, such as sheltered workshops, and, instead, in integrated competitive employment where individuals are earning the minimum wage or higher.

The bill would create a demonstration project, which is analogous to a trial where by states with Medicaid buy-in programs that shift individuals out of segregated employment and into integrated employment would receive an increase in their Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP). If a state moved 10% of its population in segregated work settings into an integrated environment, they would receive a 2% increase in their FMAP funding. This would continue to increase in intervals of 2 tenths of a percent until a state transitioned out 40% of those individuals, at which point they would receive a maximum FMAP increase of 2.8%. Fifteen states would be permitted to participate in the program, and the application process would be competitive. The states would be chosen by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. States would be required to report on best practices in making this transition, lessons learned, and outcomes.

Often times, when segregated work settings are closed, there is a concern about what the individuals will do to fill their day. To address that concern, the bill contains tracking requirements and indicates that states will only receive their FMAP increases if they are able to demonstrate that the individuals previously in segregated settings are now competitively employed. This bill is similar, though not identical, to a bill introduced in 2015 under the same name by Senators Charles Grassley (R-IA), Robert Casey Jr. (D-PA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR). AJFCA and JFNA advocated on behalf of the Senate bill during Jewish Disability Advocacy Day 2016. To learn more information about this legislation or other disability policy priorities, please email [Liz Leibowitz](#), AJFCA's Director of Government Affairs.