



October 14, 2013

Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown,

On behalf of the Association of People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE), the only national non-profit organization with an exclusive focus on integrated employment and career advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities, we congratulate you and the many Californians with disabilities on the passage of California's Employment First policy (AB 1041). We applaud your efforts to improve integrated employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through making California an Employment First state!

As you know, in California only 36.7% of working-age adults with a disability are in the workforce (either employed or unemployed) compared to 71.2% of those without a disability.¹ However, we know that individuals with disabilities want to join the workforce in integrated, community-based employment at minimum wage or higher, alongside their peers without disabilities, but many cannot due to barriers established in the current system.² By passing AB 1041, the State of California has made a clear legislative statement that integrated employment should be the first consideration for all Californians of working-age, while not eliminating other options for individuals with disabilities.

As an organization that promotes policies which enhance the social and economic inclusion and empowerment of citizens with disabilities, APSE strongly supports the concept that all citizens deserve access to "real jobs with real wages." Through APSE's hard work, and from support from advocates around the country, we have seen twenty-six states adopt an official Employment First policy (based on legislation, policy directive, etc.).³ California has now joined this national movement that has been a catalyst for increasing the workforce participation rate for individuals with disabilities!

We believe, that all working age adults and youth with disabilities deserve the right to work in jobs fully integrated within the general workforce, working side-by-side with co-workers without disabilities, earning minimum wage or higher. By signing AB 1041, the State of California has reaffirmed this statement by taking an essential step forward to improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Congratulations again!

Sincerely,

Laura A. Owens, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Ryley Newport
Public Policy Associate

¹ <http://statedata.info/statedatabook/>

² <http://www.thearc.org/document.doc?id=3672>

³ [http://www.apse.org/docs/Employment%20First%20List%209-13%20\(APSE%20version\).pdf](http://www.apse.org/docs/Employment%20First%20List%209-13%20(APSE%20version).pdf)