



**August 11, 2014**

**Thank you, Congress!**

**Budget:** *Senate releases Labor-H subcommittee bill, House plans to vote on CR in September*

**Health and Entitlements:** *SSDI in the News, ABLE Act heads to House floor, NDI Releases New Financial Report*

**Education:** *Restraint and Seclusion Makes National Headlines, JRC Electric Shock on CBS News*

**Employment:** *WIOA Becomes Law, White House releases report on inclusive job checklist*

**In Other News:** *Autism Cares Passes Congress, CRPD may see September vote, ADA Anniversaries*

**The Face of Congress:** *Meet your Member: Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)*

### **DPS Partners Thank Congress**

Congress is on recess for the remainder of August, but before they left we sent some standout members [a special message](#) thanking them for their work on disability issues! [This short video](#) was developed to honor retiring Members of Congress for their legislative successes on behalf of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It was jointly developed by 6 national organizations that partner for the Disability Policy Seminar each year – NACDD, The Arc, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered, and United Cerebral Palsy. Check out [the video](#) for yourself and see what DD Council faces you recognize!

### **Budget**

The Senate Appropriations Committee has released the FY2015 Labor-HHS-ED appropriations bill (under which DD Council spending is allocated) as well as the committee report. Click the corresponding links for the Senate [bill](#) and [report](#). The Senate Labor HHS Appropriations Subcommittee approved the bill on June 10, which includes a \$1 million increase for the DD Act programs thanks to the great advocacy efforts by DD Council staff and members. The bill has not yet been considered by the full Appropriations Committee due to concerns over potentially contentious amendments. A full Committee markup is now unlikely and the release of these materials leads many to speculate that next steps will be conference negotiations with the Senate and the House on a potential omnibus package (group of spending bills) for FY15 following November elections. Based on this latest news, DD Councils should prepare for a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government after September 30 until the end of the calendar year. In order to avoid a government shutdown, [House Speaker John Boehner \(R-OH\) announced in July](#) that the House would vote in September on a continuing resolution that would expire in December.

### **Health and Entitlements**

- **SSDI in the News**

Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) and Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) released an op-ed on the recent nomination of Carolyn Colvin to be the next Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (she is currently Acting Commissioner). They outlined the task she will have to fix the vital safety net that is the federal Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) program. Read the full story [here](#). The Social Security Board of Trustees recently released an annual report on the long term financial status of the Social Security trust funds. Most notably, the Disability Insurance (DI) Trust Fund is projected to be depleted in 2016; after that, tax income will only cover 81% of scheduled benefits if legislation is not enacted to solve the financial imbalance. The report states that lawmakers must act soon to avoid reductions to SSDI payouts in 2016. Click [here](#) to read a summary of the report.

- **ABLE Act Passes out of House Committee**



NACDD attended two hearings in July on the Achieving a Better Life Experience Act (S.313/H.R.647). On July 23, the Senate Finance Committee held a subcommittee hearing on the bill calling for its passage. The Senate hearing can be [viewed here](#). On July 31, the House Ways and Means Committee held a markup of the bill, with the unanimous decision to send it to the House floor for a vote. Information about [the markup can be found here](#). The House version of the bill passed an amendment by Chairman Dave Camp (R-MI) which includes defining eligible ABLE account holders as having acquired a disability before the age of 26 and also sets out limitations for annual aggregate contributions to the ABLE account (such as inheritances) in the amount of \$14,000. NACDD understands that some of these changes were necessary to maintain the cost projection of the legislation. For a full summary of the Chairman's amendment, [click here](#). NACDD will be following the legislation when Congress returns in September – members like Senator Schumer (D-NY) are [already calling for a vote!](#)

- **Social Security Administration Announces National Disability Coalition**

In line with the Social Security Administration's (SSA) commitment to developing responsive policy to empower individuals with disabilities and to minimize financial hardship in accordance with the statutory guidelines of the disability program, they have created the [National Disability Coalition](#) (NDC). The NDC is an open coalition that gives all interested stakeholders an opportunity to share their thoughts on pertinent disability and social security topics with key policymakers. **The NDC is currently surveying four questions on the disability decision process. In order to participate [click here](#) or fill out [this survey](#) created by NACDD by August 15!**

- **Direct Support Professional Week**

For the seventh consecutive year, the Senate unanimously approved a resolution to name the week of September 7 "National Direct Support Professional Recognition Week." Click [here](#) to get more involved!

- **NDI Event on Financial Capability**



[The National Disability Institute](#) published a report on July 22<sup>nd</sup> on groundbreaking data collected by means of the FINRA Investor Education Foundation 2012 National Financial Capability Study. [The report](#) indicates that people with disabilities are less financially stable than people without disabilities, despite the American's with Disabilities Act's guarantee that all individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to reach "economic self-sufficiency." NACDD attended the press briefing and release of the report and looks forward to working with NDI on these findings and future opportunities to educate people with disabilities about financial literacy and spending.

- **MD-CARE Amendments passes HELP Committee**

The Paul D. Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Community Assistance, Research and Education (MD-CARE) Amendments of 2014 passed the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee on July 23. This legislation would improve data sharing and collection and coordination between various health agencies, strengthen current research, and improve information-sharing with physicians treating muscular dystrophy. For updates, check the Muscular Dystrophy Association's [webpage](#).

## Education

- **National Headlines Highlight Misuse of Restraint/Seclusion**

The Washington Post [reported](#) on several cases of misuse of restraint and seclusion in two Prince William County public schools in Virginia, calling national attention to this issue. Further investigation found that while there was no evidence of students being physically harmed, restraint and seclusion techniques systematically deprived students with disabilities an appropriate public education by failing to take into account individual student needs. This investigation prompted an agreement requiring Prince William county to review records of any student who was restrained, secluded, or placed in a “reorientation” area more than once during the past two school years. The agreement also demands compensatory services, staff training, and a plan to increase instruction when students are removed from classes. View the official complaint [here](#).

The Massachusetts DD Council also brought to our attention [this national exposure](#) by CBS of the use of electric shock on people with disabilities at the Judge Rotenberg Center (JRC). NACDD is working with the Food and Drug Administration while they consider a ban on the devices used at JRC.

## Employment

- **WIOA Becomes Law!**



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which reauthorizes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, was signed into law by President Obama on July 22. WIOA provides job training services in order for individuals with disabilities to gain and keep employment in integrated work settings at competitive wages. Click [here](#) to read the White House press release, [here](#) for the NACDD press release and [here](#) to view a video of the signing. NACDD will be releasing information in the coming months what changes WIOA will bring to the workforce and Administration on Community Living!

- **EEOC Shares White House Report on Employment**

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shared a White House report with NACDD titled “[Ready to Work: Job-Driven Training and American Opportunity](#)”. Released on July 22, this report underscores the Obama Administration’s efforts in re-centering the focus of government funded training opportunities on job readiness. Most notably, the Job-Driven Checklist specifically requires all training programs to provide accommodations to people with disabilities. Understanding that increasing the employment rate for people with disabilities requires inter-agency collaboration, the Checklist encourages important collaboration with Medicaid agencies, VR agencies, employment providers, and Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

## In Other News

- **Autism CARES Act Passes Congress**

The Autism Collaboration, Accountability, Research, Education, and Support Act of 2014, known as the Autism CARES Act, was unanimously passed by the Senate on July 31. This five-year reauthorization of the Combatting Autism Reauthorization Act of 2011 provides \$1.3 billion to expand research, surveillance, and education activities related to Autism spectrum disorders to be conducted by an array of agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) . This bicameral, bipartisan bill is now on its way to the President’s desk and is expected to be signed into law soon. For more information, read [AUCD’s](#) press release.

- **White House Celebrates 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ADA**

Watch [this video](#) of to view President Obama's comments commemorating the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It's not too early to prepare for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary – visit <http://adalegacy.org/> to get involved!

- **The CRPD May See Vote in September**

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), or disability treaty, passed out of the [Senate Foreign Relations Committee](#) on July 22 with a 12-6 vote. Supporters including former Senator Bob Dole and veterans groups held a press conference the day after the Committee vote. Watch a clip of Senator Ayotte (R-NH) at the [press conference here](#). The final step for the treaty will now be a Senate floor vote. It appears that 6 more Republican votes are needed in addition to the full Democratic Caucus and Republican supporters Senators McCain, Barrasso, Ayotte, Collins, Kirk, and Murkowski. To get involved in the final push, visit [www.disabilitytreaty.org!](http://www.disabilitytreaty.org!)

## The Face of Congress

- **Meet Your Member: Representative Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI)**



Twitter: [@TulsiPress](#)

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) has represented Hawaii's 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District since 2013. She serves as the Vice Chair of the Democratic National Committee. Congresswoman Gabbard serves on the House's Homeland Security Committee as well as the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Additionally, she sits on the Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee and Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee. She is the first Hindu member, the first American Samoan member, and one of the first female combat veterans serving in Congress. Before her Congressional debut, she was the youngest woman in the US to be elected to a state legislature at the age of 21. The first piece of legislation she introduced to Congress, the [Helping Hero's Fly Act](#), was signed into law on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013. This Act provides expedited air passenger screening to severely injured veterans and veterans with disabilities. She has co-sponsored 40 bills in the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress. If it wasn't already abundantly clear that Congresswoman Gabbard is a force to be reckoned with, this fact will: she surfs in her free time.



A special thanks to NACDD Public Policy Intern, Nathalia Cibotti, for her work on this edition of the Washington update! Need more information? Contact NACDD Director of Public Policy, Esmé Grant, at [egrant@nacdd.org](mailto:egrant@nacdd.org). For up to date policy happenings, follow us on Twitter @NACDD!