RESOLUTION ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS, disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes one’s right to fully participate in all aspects of community life and disability can develop at any point during an individual’s life time and have varying impacts; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities are underutilized in our workforce and frequently experience social and economic disadvantage; and

WHEREAS, only 19.8 percent of people with disabilities are in the workforce, compared to 68.7 percent of people without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities age 21-64 are twice as likely to fall below the federal poverty line; and

WHEREAS, individuals with disabilities bring valuable skills to the workforce, and represent an untapped segment of the labor pool for public, private and nonprofit sector employment; and

WHEREAS, the unemployment rate for people with disabilities is 8.7 percent, compared to a rate of 4.6 percent for people without disabilities; and

WHEREAS, employment is the most direct and cost-effective means to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve independence, economic self-sufficiency, and a sense of dignity and self-worth; and

WHEREAS, people with disabilities are a key factor in states’ ability to build strong, inclusive workforces that translate into economic success; and

WHEREAS, while state policy efforts to support increased disability employment have made an impact, many individuals with disabilities remain unemployed or under-employed; and

WHEREAS, moving the needle on this critical workforce issue will require strong public policy at the state level that systematically addresses a number of key areas.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments affirms the work of the National Taskforce on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities convened in partnership between CSG and the National Conference of State Legislatures and affirms the policy options of the Task Force that include policies and practices that make the workforce—in both the public and private sector – more inclusive and accessible for people with disabilities, which will benefit the employee, the employer, and the economy as a whole.

Adopted by The Council of State Governments’ Executive Committee this 11th Day of December, 2016 in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia.