

## **A Call for Truth, Dignity, and the Unwavering Support of Workers with Disabilities**

Since 1925, the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA) has been at the forefront of advocating for the employment of people with disabilities, along with other leading disability based organizations—ensuring people with disabilities have access to opportunities they seek and are fully qualified for, across both public and private sectors. Our work has been rooted in breaking down social, physical, legal, systemic, and attitudinal barriers that have long prevented talented individuals from securing meaningful employment. This commitment extends to disabled veterans, civilians, and those with physical, sensory, and mental conditions—all of whom bring invaluable contributions to our workforce. Despite the gains made in accessing the labor force, people with disabilities still have twice the unemployment rate of non-disabled workers in the face of continued employment discrimination.

Like all Americans, we are deeply saddened by the tragic loss of life that occurred on January 29<sup>th</sup> at Washington D.C.'s Ronald Reagan National Airport. However, we are dismayed by the President's unfounded remarks seeming to blame FAA workers with disabilities for this accident. There is no evidence that FAA employees with disabilities had any role in this tragedy. As with all federal agencies, the FAA maintains rigorous qualification standards that every candidate must meet, regardless of disability or not. To suggest otherwise is not only misleading but harmful—perpetuating dangerous stereotypes and undermining the dedication of federal employees who, like all workers, are hired for their skills, qualifications, and ability to perform their jobs.

For over a century, every U.S. President—Republican and Democrat alike—has stood in support of employing veterans and civilians with disabilities. This bipartisan commitment has been fundamental to the progress made in ensuring that all Americans have a fair chance at employment. To see this progress threatened by unwarranted rhetoric is both deeply disappointing and unacceptable. We will not allow decades of hard-fought advancement to be diminished by misinformation and discrimination.

We call upon all Americans to stand with us in defending the rights, programs, and services that empower workers with disabilities to thrive in the workplace. We urge continued support for the federal laws that protect and promote the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities, ensuring they can contribute their enormous talents to the American economy. This is not just a matter of justice—it is a matter of economic strength, innovation, and doing what is right.

Let us rise above division and reaffirm our nation's commitment to accessibility, inclusion, dignity, and opportunity for all Americans with disabilities.

The National Rehabilitation Association (NRA)

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