Congressional Research Service
Informing the legislative debate since 1914

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: Fact Sheet

October 5, 2022

Congressional Research Service
https://crsreports.congress.gov
R47272

CRS REPORT
Prepared for Members and
Committees of Congress

Introduction

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is observed annually in October. It celebrates the contributions of people with disabilities to America's workplaces and the economy, and "reaffirms the commitment to ensure equal opportunity for all citizens." Each year, the month is celebrated with a theme chosen by the U.S. Department of Labor. For 2022, the theme is "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation," which recognizes the vital role people with disabilities play in making the nation's workforce diverse and inclusive.

History and Legislation

As a precursor to National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), in 1945, Congress established "the first week in October of each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" (Public Law 176, 79th Congress). In 1962, to bring more attention to those with all types of disabilities, Congress dropped the word "Physically" through the adoption of P.L. 91-442, resulting in the condensed National Employ the Handicapped Week. More recently, in 1988, P.L. 100-630 expanded the commemoration to a month and altered its name to the current National Disability Employment Awareness Month. National Disability Employment Awareness Month is codified at 36 U.S.C. §121.

Related CRS Reports

CRS has prepared reports that explain or address working with a disability. Some of these include the following:

- CRS In Focus IF10506, *Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)*, by William R. Morton
- CRS Report R43255, *The Mental Health Workforce: A Primer*, by Elayne J. Heisler
- CRS Report R43468, *Special Minimum Wages for Workers with Disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Benjamin Collins

CRS also has a report on the process of observing commemorative days, weeks, and months:

- CRS Report R44431, *Commemorative Days, Weeks, and Months: Background and Current Practice*, by Jacob R. Straus and Jared C. Nagel

Sample Congressional Speeches and Recognitions

Members of Congress can make floor statements, issue press releases, or enter Extensions of Remarks into the *Congressional Record* to recognize federal holidays and observances. The following are some recent examples that may be of assistance in preparing such statements.

Senator Richard Burr, "National Disability Employment Awareness Month," Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 167 (October 26, 2021), pp. S7365-S7366.

Representative Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, "National Disability Employment Awareness Month," House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, vol. 165 (October 22, 2019), p. H8304.

Representative Andy Levin, "Recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month," House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, vol. 165 (October 21, 2019), p. H8283.

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, "Raising Awareness of National Disability Employment Awareness Month," House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, vol. 164 (October 23, 2018), p. E1443.

Presidential Proclamations

One of the many uses of a presidential proclamation is to ceremoniously honor a group or call attention to certain issues or events. The law requests that the President issue a proclamation each year. Some recent NDEAM proclamations, from the Compilation of Presidential Documents, include the following:

- Presidential Proclamations—Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (2021-)
- Presidential Proclamations—Donald J. Trump (2017-2021)
- Presidential Proclamations—Barack H. Obama (2009-2017)
- Presidential Proclamations—George W. Bush (2001-2009)

Presidential proclamations and remarks from 1993 to the present are available through the GovInfo service on the Government Publishing Office website. Earlier remarks are available through The American Presidency Project, established by the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Statistics

U.S. Census Bureau, "National Disability Employment Awareness Month: October 2022."

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics—2021."

U.S. Census Bureau, "Disability Data."

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Persons with a Disability: Barriers to Employment, Types of Assistance, and Other Labor-Related Issues—July 2021."

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, "Disability Employment Statistics."

Educational, Cultural, and Advocacy Organizations and Resources

Numerous government agencies and nongovernmental organizations provide information on and promote advocacy for the disabled. Some of these organizations include the following:

U.S. Department of Labor, "National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022." Official webpage for NDEAM. Provides general information on the annual commemorative month, highlighting promotional materials.

Library of Congress, "National Disability Employment Month, About." Provides general information on the annual commemorative month, highlighting access to Library of Congress resources.

Library of Congress, "National Disability Employment Month: A Commemorative Observances Legal Research Guide." Provides links to legislative branch and executive branch primary resource historical documents. These documents formulated and impacted the current commemorative month, as well as preceding observances for the working disabled.

U.S. Department of Labor, "Office of Disability Employment Policy." Agency within the U.S. Department of Labor presiding over NDEAM.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Spotlight on Statistics: Labor Market Characteristics of People with a Disability." Visual display of data promoting the importance of NDEAM.

National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), "NDRN Celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month." Advocacy group supporting the effort to employ the disabled.

Social Security Administration, "Working While Disabled—Social Security Can Help." Information on the exploration of working while receiving disability benefits.

Author Information

Gary Sidor
Senior Technical Information Specialist

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.