



**The One Percent Coalition
Honorary Chairmen:**

The Honorable Bob Dole

The Honorable Bob Kerrey

One Percent Coalition Applauds New Federal Guidelines; Calls on the Congress to Enhance Opportunities for Workers with Disabilities

For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON, DC (September 12, 2006) – The One Percent Coalition today applauded new federal guidelines to remove federal employment barriers, but called on the Congress to enact legislation designed to enhance employment opportunities for millions of workers with disabilities. The Office of Management & Budget's regulations, which took effect last month, were released on the 16th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities act.

OPM issued a [final regulation](#) regarding the excepted service appointments of persons with mental retardation, severe physical disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities. The regulation improves the Federal Government's ability to hire persons with these disabilities. It is designed to remove barriers and increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

According to the new rules, for all new appointments under 5 CFR 213.3102(u), agencies may begin using the authority on August 25, 2006. Agencies must convert all individuals who are serving under the two authorities that are abolished by this regulation, 5 CFR 213.3102(t) and 213.3102(gg), to the new appointing authority, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), by January 22, 2007.

"The new regulations could not have come at a better time for workers with disabilities wanting to be engaged in competitive employment," said John D. Kemp, spokesperson of the One Percent Coalition. "But this is not the first time the federal government has tried to enhance opportunities for the millions of Americans with disabilities who want to but are unable to find work. That is why the time is ripe for the Congress to enact S.1570, the Employer Work Incentive Act for Individuals with Severe Disabilities."

According to Kemp, recent reports have demonstrated that workers with disabilities are leaving the federal workforce in record numbers.

"The government's own statistics show a 23% decline over the past decade," Kemp further stated. "We need innovative approaches to solve the unacceptably high unemployment plaguing this untapped pool of workers, and the One Percent Coalition has presented a viable solution."

Andrew Imparato, president and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), agreed.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act is 16 years old and yet three out of four Americans with disabilities still cannot find work," said Imperato, who supports S.1570. "AAPD stands behind this bi-partisan legislation and new incentives for the private sector to employ people with severe disabilities."

The final regulation modernizes the appointment processes for people with disabilities in several significant ways:

- Consolidating three separate Schedule A appointing authorities to include mental retardation, severe physical disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities into one appointing authority.
- Expanding agency acceptance of proof of disability.
- Allowing temporary appointments to determine the applicant's readiness.
- Clarifying that agencies may also make temporary (for positions not expected to last more than 1 year), time-limited and permanent appointments.
- Clarifying the distinction between proof of disability and certification of job readiness (i.e., the applicant is likely to succeed in performing the duties of the position for which he or she is applying).

"While the new regulations might appear beneficial, we have to take into consideration the history of this problem," summarized Terry R. Farmer, President & CEO of the Florida Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, of the high unemployment rates. "New regulations are good, but so are creative approaches that foster collaboration among the public, private and independent sectors of our economy. It is our view that S.1570 achieves this objective."

The One Percent Coalition is committed to the achievable goal of helping at least one percent (94,000) of severely disabled Americans find competitive employment. Individuals with physical or mental impairments that limit one or more functional capabilities with respect to work are extremely disadvantaged in the world of competitive employment. With this understanding, the One Percent Coalition believes that government, business and the disability community can work together to achieve the modest, yet realistic, goal of improving their employment rate by at least one percent.

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