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I strongly oppose the Department of Labor's proposed changes to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act that would eliminate the requirement to invite applicants and employees to voluntarily self-identify as a person with a disability, and that would rescind the 7% utilization goal for federal contractors.

These rollbacks would cause serious harm to equal employment opportunity for people with disabilities, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals.
•Self-identification matters. Without a formal, voluntary self-ID process, many qualified candidates with disabilities will remain invisible in the hiring process. Employers will lose critical data on disability inclusion, making accountability nearly impossible.
•The 7% utilization goal matters. This benchmark is not a quota; it is a fair, flexible guideline that motivates contractors to recruit, hire, and retain people with disabilities. Removing it will weaken compliance and reduce workforce participation.
•Equal opportunity matters. Section 503 has been essential in moving beyond nondiscrimination to proactive inclusion. Rolling back these obligations reverses decades of progress and sends the harmful message that disability employment is optional rather than a civil rights priority.

As someone who is [Deaf / Hard of Hearing / connected to the Deaf community], I know firsthand how important strong Section 503 protections are. These rules help ensure that talented workers are given a fair chance to contribute their skills in federal contracting jobs.

I urge the Department of Labor to withdraw this proposal and instead strengthen enforcement of Section 503 so that people with disabilities, including Deaf and Hard of Hearing workers, can thrive in the American workforce.

Respectfully submitted,
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