November 17, 2026

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

As the national organization that represents individuals with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), a neuromuscular disease, **Cure SMA is pleased to support the introduction of your Opportunity Through Employment Act**. Your legislation recognizes the untapped employment potential of people with disabilities by incentivizing disability hiring and breaking down workplace accessibility barriers.

SMA is a genetic neurodegenerative disease that severely weakens muscles over time, taking away a person's ability to walk, sit without support, and perform other essential functions of everyday life. SMA does not affect cognitive ability.

Many adults with SMA are highly educated and experienced, and work in a wide range of sectors of the U.S. economy. About 65% of adults with SMA, aged 25 and older, have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with about 36% of the general population.[i] However, roughly one in four adults with SMA who are seeking work are unemployed. In addition, among adults with SMA who work part-time, about 12% are seeking full-time employment, and 48% work part-time to stay below income or resource thresholds to maintain eligibility for caregiving or other public benefits.[ii] *"Many intelligent, determined people in the SMA community limit their employment because they would lose their benefit,"* said an **adult with SMA**.

The Opportunity Through Employment Act would help address some of the employment barriers facing people with disabilities, including those with SMA. The legislation would promote the hiring and retention of workers with disabilities by strengthening existing tax incentives for employers that hire individuals with disabilities and for businesses that make their workplaces more accessible for their employees with disabilities. Your legislation would:

- Extend and increase the **Work Opportunity Tax Credit** to a maximum of $5,000 (from $2,400) for employers that hire an eligible person with a disability;
- Double the **Disability Access Credit** (from $5,000 to $10,000) for small businesses that make their businesses accessible to people with disabilities; and
- Increase the **Architectural and Transportation Barrier Tax Credit** (from $15,000 to $30,000) for expenses in a single year to remove a physical or transportation barrier, such as an inaccessible building entrance or vehicle.

Cure SMA applauds your efforts to help address the persistent employment barriers facing people with disabilities. Cure SMA supports strengthening these incentives to make workplaces more accessible and ensure employers can easily tap into the talents of people with disabilities, including individuals with SMA. In addition, Cure SMA supports other legislative solutions to address disability work disincentives in current law. As **one adult with**

SMA shared, *"Federal policies exist that discourage people from working, marrying, and participating in their communities."*

Thank you for helping to promote the employment and financial security of individuals with SMA and other disabilities. Cure SMA strongly supports the Opportunity Through Employment Act, and we look forward to working with your team as you introduce and advance this legislation. For more information, your staff can contact Maynard Friesz, Vice President for Policy and Advocacy at Cure SMA, at maynard.friesz@curesma.org or 202-871-8004.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Hobby
President

Maynard Friesz
Vice President, Policy

[i] Cure SMA State of SMA Report, https://www.curesma.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2025_State-of_SMA_Report_vWeb.pdf#page=32
[ii] Cure SMA State of SMA Report, https://www.curesma.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/2025_State-of_SMA_Report_vWeb.pdf#page=32