

October 2, 2017

**Testimony of Charles Hill for National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Congressional Briefing on Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment
For People with Disabilities**

On behalf of the Hilton family, I am here today to show our commitment to a diverse workforce including people with disabilities. We strongly believe in investing our management time and resources in developing this untapped population as a reliable resource for highly valued entry-level positions that are traditionally high turnover positions.

Thanks to a professional, business-oriented "transition to work" program called Project Search, 5 of our owned/operated properties in the DC metro people have over the past 3 years focused on building the skills and abilities of a future workforce with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Our property, the Embassy Suites Washington DC, Convention Center began the Project Search partnership with the help of various partners; a local vocational agency, SEEC, DC Public Schools and DC Rehabilitation Services Administration in 2015. For the past three years, our Hilton Capital Area properties have become sites for close to 30 DC public school students transitioning from school to adulthood, learning critical work skills and developing pathways to employment. Many of these students wouldn't have much opportunities post their school time, so I think we are providing much needed training for their future.

Of the 15 graduates of the 10 month program, we are proud to share that over 70% have gone onto full and part-time positions in the local hospitality field. All earning above minimum wage, some already receiving increases in pay and hours. We have also seen more and more of our other properties want to participate and gain from this potential recruitment solution.

Young adults like our interns have long been seen as unemployable and unable to make a contribution in the workforce. Typically doomed to a life in a sheltered workshop, or "pre-vocational" activities as if they weren't ready for integrated jobs.

By identifying what contributions these young people have and matching them to a task or job that needs to be done in our industry is a win win for both the employee and Hilton as an employer.