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The Honorable John C. Carney, Jr.
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

***Re: Oppose the TIME Act (H.R. 188) to phase out & repeal “commensurate wages”
authorized un Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act***

Dear Congressman & Good Friend, John:

Like many others, Eunice and I write seeking your constructive, common-sense efforts once again on behalf of those on the margins of our community. Developmentally challenged adults in America need your help. We hope you can apply your good standing as a keen-eyed, thoughtful advocate who can work across political and personal divides to fashion courageous legislative action – this time by strenuously opposing H.R. 188. This is the improbably named “Transition to Integrated and Meaningful Employment” (TIME) ACT that amends and virtually eliminates crucial provisions of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor and Standards Act. In its place, we ask for your support of as full an array of employment opportunities for persons with significant disabilities as possible. Most such persons will not benefit but will suffer even greater hardships – economically, emotionally, and socially – from the cookie-cutter approach found in H.R. 188. If ever the proverb of “the best is often the enemy of the good” applies, it does so here in the TIME Act. For some sponsors, its negative consequences will be unintended; for others, its consequences are worth the price of another notch on their resume of fiscal conservatism, however oversimplified, chimeric and irrational it may in this case be.

As the parents of our 44-year old son with complex disabilities, we know “up close and personally” how much his two below-market, part-time jobs mean to him and his sense of self-esteem and dignity. While he may not appreciate the differences among paychecks of \$20, \$120 or \$220, he certainly treasures knowing he gets those paychecks and is deeply saddened – yes, depressed – when he does not. We would love it if all employees of “sheltered workshops” or “supported” community employment positions could enjoy a 30-hour or 40-hour week of mandated minimum wage earnings. You bet! But, we also know that it is not the “real world” to expect this to happen in any significant and socially uplifting way – at least not for a long time and not in sufficient numbers to justify the retrenchment that so many challenged persons would suffer in the successful pursuit of the ends envisaged in H.R. 188. Yes again, we want the greater employment opportunities and ever growing wage rates equal to and beyond the minimum wage. But a sledge-hammer, broad-based mandate will only see our society revert to its darker days when such persons, ***especially those representing the unsuccessful fallout from this insufficiently thought-through piece of legislation***, were shunted aside or otherwise hidden from view. We share the goals of those advocating better, more community integrated, and more remunerative job opportunities for the challenged population, but we know from experience and “in our gut” that the nice-sounding terms of H.R. 188 will not get us to where we and most of the sponsors want.

Thanks always for your support in the past, and thanks in advance for your efforts to educate the well-meaning of your colleagues who have leant their names to this potentially devastating piece of legislation.

With our warmest personal regards,

DICK & EUNICE PRYOR