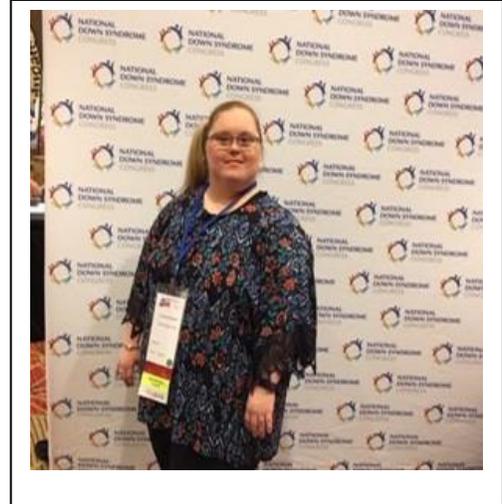


Dear Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Jessica Smart. I am 32 years old and live in Olive Branch, MS. I graduated from Lewisburg High School with an Occupational diploma and attended two semesters at Northwest Mississippi Junior College. I worked for the Down Syndrome Association of the Mid-South (DSAM) as a Communications Assistant until last year when the pandemic hit. I took the office skills I learned, and I am presently the bookkeeper for a local Landscape Company. I am taking a disciple class at my church, and I hope to someday serve in the ministry. I enjoy using my actions and my voice to advocate for those with disabilities.



I worked with a group of local and state representatives from Mississippi to rewrite the language for the ABLE Act bill and was with Mississippi Governor Bryant as he signed the bill. I have served on the Board of Directors for DSAM, National Down Syndrome Congress, and I am presently on the board for the ARC of NW Mississippi.

I would like to ask you to please co-sponsor the **Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (S.260.HR 873)**. This bill is a positive step toward phasing out Section 14 © subminimum wage over a six-year period. It also provides the funding, supports, and training necessary to change the infrastructure of outdated business models. This is a responsible approach to ending the discriminatory payment of subminimum wage while helping businesses transform to competitive integrated employment settings. Competitive Integrated Employment is when people with disabilities work in mainstream jobs alongside co-workers without disabilities and are paid wages comparable to workers without disabilities. For me to work and live independently, it is important that I be paid comparable wages to co-workers without disabilities. I take pride in doing a good job and being a responsible employee, and think I deserve to earn comparable wages.

If you have questions, my contact information is below.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jessica Smart  
Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone  
Email