

Office of the
Chief Administrative Officer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6860

January 8, 2024

Members of Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representatives Crockett, Molinaro, Titus, Wittman, and Moore:

Thank you for your letter regarding the U.S. House of Representatives' participation in purchasing programs under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (JWOD). I agree with you that it is important for Americans with disabilities to have equal access to opportunities and am happy to provide an overview of the House's participations in programs expanding access.

By way of background, the House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) procurement practices are regulated by the *Guidelines For Procurement Of Goods And Services For The U.S. House Of Representatives* (the Guidelines) adopted by the Committee on House Administration. Although the House is not subject to the Federal Acquisitions Regulations (FAR), the CAO continues to voluntarily support Americans with disabilities in the spirit and intent of the JWOD, the AbilityOne Program, and the Randolph Sheppard Act.

The House Supply Store (Store) has supported JWOD since 1996 and carries a wide complement of AbilityOne Office Products. The Store proudly displays and promotes these products for sale. During this last National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month, the Store showcased a special display of AbilityOne products at the entrance. The CAO will continue to consider and explore additional marketing opportunities for AbilityOne products. Additionally, we will also continue to encourage AbilityOne suppliers to present new offerings to us, as they become available.

The CAO also participates in other programs for Americans with disabilities in federal contracting, including a House contract started in 2017 with a Randolph-Sheppard Act entity to manage and operate a 24/7 Convenience Store and vending machine location in two areas of the O'Neill House Office Building. We are very satisfied with the vendor's performance under this program.

The CAO will continue to look for ways to expand opportunities for American with disabilities within the House Community. If I can be of additional assistance on this or other matters within my purview, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Catherine L. Szpindor
Chief Administrative Officer



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

December 11, 2023

The Honorable Catherine Szpindor
Chief Administrative Officer
Office of Chief Administrative Officer
200 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20024

The Honorable Chere Rexroat
Architect of the Capitol
Office of the Architect of the Capitol
2nd St SW, D St SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

The Honorable J. Thomas Manger
Chief of Police
United States Capitol Police
119 D Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hugh Nathaniel Halpern
Director
Government Publishing Office
732 North Capitol St NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

The Honorable Patrick Findlay
Executive Director
Office of Congressional Workplace Rights
110 2nd Street, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

The Honorable Gene Dodaro
Comptroller General
Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20226

The Honorable Phillip L. Swagel
Director
Congressional Budget Office
110 2nd Street, SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

The Honorable Brian Pugh
Executive Director
Stennis Center for Public Service
201 Massachusetts Ave NW, Ste C-7
Washington, D.C. 20002

The Honorable Melissa Blaschke
Executive Director
Library of Congress
101 Independence Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20540

CC:

The Honorable Bryan Steil
Chairman
House Committee on Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Morelle
Ranking Member
House Committee on Administration
1309 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

To whom it may concern:

On December 3rd, 2023, we celebrated International Persons with Disabilities Day. In doing so, we recognize the roughly 42 million Americans with disabilities and their inspiring efforts to lead rich and fulfilling lives. We further celebrate the work that Americans with disabilities have done to organize for equal rights and necessary accommodations to ensure equal access to all opportunities—including employment.

Prior to the landmark passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Americans with disabilities demonstrated to Congress that if given the opportunity to work, they could provide goods and services as proficiently as—if not better than—anyone else in the market. In 1938, Congress listened, and passed the Wagner-O’Day Act (later amended as Javits-Wagner-O’Day), requiring federal government procurement to use top-quality products made by the disability community whenever possible. As a direct result of this Act, nearly 40,000 Americans with disabilities per year are able to work, earning an average wage of over \$15 an hour, providing many essential products and services the federal government relies on.

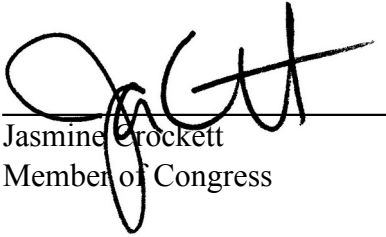
Yet there is still more work to be done. Over time, the Legislative Branch procurement of AbilityOne products and services has fallen behind that of the Executive Branch in terms of promotion, transparency, and coordination. That is why we are calling on the procurement offices of the Legislative Branch entities, already required to engage with the AbilityOne program, to take deliberate action not just to achieve parity with the Executive, but to surpass them.

For Ms. Szpindor and Ms. Rexroat, in terms of promotion, while we commend the work of the Office of Chief Administrative Officer and the Office of the Architect of the Capitol highlighting AbilityOne products during National Disability Month, we seek to know how your offices plan to commit to more actively promoting opportunities for Congressional Member offices to purchase AbilityOne products and services throughout the year. We believe there are easy mechanisms in place, such as the House Supply Store and Supply Store website, that can be utilized to achieve this goal. Beyond making it simpler for federal employees seeking AbilityOne products and services in the workplace, **we ask whether you will commit to working with incoming Member offices to ensure they are aware of the AbilityOne program? Additionally, will your offices commit to exploring how to leverage the power of defaults to increase purchases of AbilityOne products and services?**

Regarding transparency, **we ask that you provide information as to whether each of your respective offices collect internal data on procurement from AbilityOne, and whether you are committed to publishing that data so that Congress is able to monitor compliance with the statute?** Additionally, we are interested in ensuring there is transparency for the AbilityOne vendors and distributors. Specifically, **when your office begins the process of procuring a product or service, do your offices work with the AbilityOne Commission to ensure they are aware of what your needs are so as to allow their vendors and distributors to reach out if they already have the product or service, or explore getting into that space to fill that need? If not, are you committed to enhancing your procurement transparency?**

Finally, **will your office commit to designating an AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) within your office, charged with advocating for your office's increased use of the program, serving as a liaison with the Commission, and generally fulfilling the role as nearly as is applicable described by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy Memorandum, "Increasing the Participation of Americans with Disabilities in Federal Contracting"?** We believe that having such a position is essential and hope to see positive action on this from every office in the very near future.

Sincerely,



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Marcus J. Molinaro
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress