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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DC Developmental Disabilities Council Joins Broad Effort to Observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

(Washington, D.C.) — The DC Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) announced its participation in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. This year's theme is "The Right Talent, Right Now."

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law promoting employment of people with physical disabilities during the first week of October. In 1962, the definition of disability was broadened to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month, which we now know as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"Every day, individuals with disabilities add significant value and talent to our workforce and economy," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta. "Individuals with disabilities offer employers diverse perspectives on how to tackle challenges and achieve success. Individuals with disabilities have the right talent, right now."

The DDC engages in a variety of activities to educate our community on disability employment issues and its commitment to an inclusive work culture. These efforts include support for District-wide secondary transition initiatives, participation in the Aspiring Professionals program through the vocational rehabilitation agency, and working with families to set high expectations for young people with disabilities.

The DDC's Vice-Chairperson, Ricardo Thornton said, "I'd like to see more people with disabilities living independent lives as part of their communities. We have to move the blocks in front of employment doors; we have to fund creative programs that support inclusiveness."

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages — during October and throughout the year — by visiting [www.dol.gov/NDEAM](http://www.dol.gov/NDEAM).