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nTIDE

Lunch & Learn Webcast-(As-Live Transcript via StreamText)

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 >> Hello and welcome, everybody, to the National Trends at Disability Employment. Or nTIDE disability series.

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 >> Hi, everybody, this is Andrew Houtenville from the University of New Hampshire. Just some quick tips, can you hear me okay, Kate? I notice the green box didn't move.

 >> Yes, we can.

 >> Good.

 >> Select the right speaker in Zoom. Go to audio settings or audio. It looks different, depending on if you're on a Mac or PC. You can also choose the closed captions. There's a closed caption somewhere on your screen. You can choose to see the subtitles and view the transcript as it's being produced.

 Let's go ahead and go to the first slide, so, today, welcome to the February numbers. So, March ‑‑ today's March, but we're working with February numbers. We don't yet have the results for March.

 We'll hear from John O'Neill and Denise Rozell from Kessler Foundation and AUCD.

 Just a little about us. This is a joint effort of University of New Hampshire, Kessler Foundation and AUCD. This is a special episode we do in the middle of the month to address things related to COVID and we provide statistics beyond what the federal government produces. In part, because we wait until we get the survey answers, we get the raw data from the federal government.

 Today's agenda is, we'll start off with welcome, right now. We'll then go into the numbers and then we'll open it up, we'll hear from John and Denise and open it up to Q&A.

 All right... there's some interesting things going on policy‑wise that can really affect the next couple months. We urge you to stick around for that discussion. I know with the numbers, we're bringing you here all the time, but you should stick around for the discussion.

 So, again, slow recovery from the great recession. Some good news and then COVID hit. All right, let's look at the percentage of people who are employed.

 So, we'll do people with and without disabilities. So the top line is people without disabilities. The bottom line represents people with disabilities. And this is ‑‑ this leads us to March. Just before the pandemic took over the economy and over the country.

 And what we see is the decline in employment, the percentage employed, goes down for both people with and without disabilities. After, during, and after the great recession. It continues to decline, well into say, 2013 for people with disabilities. The recovery from the great recession didn't really start kicking off until 2014, 2015.

 We, then, actually see a very interesting area when the economy hit full employment in 2016 and '17, we see these two lines narrowing together. This is the first time it's really been seen. Usually, the gap, the width of the gap slows in its width, but here, we're actually seeing a little recovery from the recession.

 And then we hit March. So... we were seeing relatively even news over the last two years of 2018 and 2019, it was flat for people with disabilities, rising for people without disabilities and then we get the pandemic. The next slide I'll show is a progression of slides that shows the pandemic hitting.

 So, we get this huge drop for people with and without disabilities. They're graphed on different axes. That's why the 63% is below the 31% for people with disabilities. What we see here is a drop from 73.5%, to 63.2%, for people with disabilities, it went from 31.7 to 26.3%.

 Point wise, this is a bigger jump percentage‑point wise. It's a little bigger for people with disabilities. There's a 17% jump, decline for people with disabilities. And only 14 or 15% decline for people without disabilities. Given that disability was already really low, percentage‑wise, it ends up being a bigger jump for people with disabilities.

 We see some recovery in May, we see, you know, this is shortly after the lock down was being lifted, companies are learning, getting PPE in place, getting Plexiglass in place. Social distancing rules in place.

 We see some pretty big increases in April, in May and June. That's pretty much going to be it, you know, there's a little bit of an increase for people without disabilities. In, in July, a good jump for people with disabilities in ‑‑ without disabilities in August. Let's go through these months. Up until, this is January ‑‑ what you're seeing is really, kind of a flattening out. Little bit of progress. But, here, for people without disabilities, you see a retrenchment, states like California, Texas, Florida, having a lot of difficulties in the fall.

 So, this, actually, the country, really, in the late, the early winter, these are the hits that we took for the holiday season.

 And we see that both, for people with and without disabilities, a decline over those periods. And so, for people with disabilities, it's kind of flat at best.

 In February, we see a slight rise for people without disabilities. Very, very meager rise, probably isn't even a statistically significant rise for people without disabilities. For people with disabilities.

 And so, this past month sees a bit of a recovery for people without disabilities, but not so much for people with disabilities. I think this'll be an ongoing concern as things start to open up, this was taken ‑‑ this survey was taken in the second week of February. It's always in the second week. Or at least the week that has the 12th of the month in it.

 And you know, we're seeing ‑‑ we were seeing some of the copies around the country kind of open up. That's probably what's driving that increase for people without disabilities. That's the story we have so far. We're not even close yet to what we were in the previous February, we're still quite a distance from there. There's a lot to be recovered.

 Most of the recovery happened early in the pandemic. The number of unemployed and percentage on furlough, we'll look at that aspect of the pandemic recession. Here are the numbers for people with and without disabilities, without disabilities on your left, with disabilities on your right.

 What you can see here is, you see that big jump in April for both people with and without disabilities. Then you see a decline for people without disabilities, you see a decline, all the way to October and then it kind of flattens out.

 And you know, it flattens out in December and January, maybe a little bit of an increase in response to the holiday peaks in COVID infractions and things starting to lock back down in certain places in the country.

 For people with disabilities, we see a, certainly, the spike in April and May. June, we see a bit of a recovery, July, but by the time, you know, if we really want to look at this, there hasn't been much recovery ‑‑ much movement since you know, July. Really.

 Let's snap in February. For February, we actually see people with disabilities, without disabilities kind of staying even. For people with disabilities, we see this increase from January to February. We see an increase in the number of people employed.

 If we want to snap a line in there, you know, there really hasn't been much progress for people without disabilities since October. As the pandemic continues and people are staying out of work, and not being employed, you know, the longer it takes, the harder it might be to match people up again with employers when the time comes to fully reopen. And we'll talk more about that when we get to the Q&A session.

 So, now we're look ‑‑ we're going to break these two groups ‑‑ all these bars into looking for work or temporary layoffs.

 So, at the beginning of the pandemic, we had a huge jump in furlough on temporary layoff. And so, for people without disabilities, we see it went from 13% of the unemployed to 79% of the unemployed. Were on temporary layoff. Kind of numbers that have never been seen in the U.S. economy.

 When I look at the overall economy, going back to 1973, furloughs were used when, when factories, during the gas crisis, during the energy crisis, the OPEC oil embargo, it reached as high as 25% of the unemployed and that was as close as we ever got. It's three times the prior peak experience.

 For people with disabilities, we see ‑‑ whoops! Wrong way. We see a similar jump. 73% of the unemployed people with disabilities were on temporary furlough, temporary layoff.

 That proportion ‑‑ as you kind of look, all the way to February, you see that ‑‑ I'm pointing to my screen ‑‑ I'm not pointing to a Blackboard. You see the percentage on furlough decline. The darker blue bar, the bottom bar gets smaller as a portion of the overall unemployed.

 Same for people without disabilities. It's really been hovering. You know, again, since about the summer, early fall ‑‑ there hasn't been much change in the percentage that are on furlough, versus the percentage that were on temporary layoff. There was a spike during 30 to 29% of the unemployed people without disabilities and that representing the holiday time increases.

 Around that time. In COVID.

 So, let's take a look. So, you know, there's a bit of good news, but we're going to talk a bit more and put some context on this a little bit more. I hesitate to call this good news, now that it's lasting so long.

 We look at the percentage who are engaged in the labor force. So, this is a percentage of people who, of the population, what percentage are employed? Looking for work? Or on temporary furlough. They're engaged in the labor market. People who have stopped looking for work who are no longer on furlough and not working, they're considered out of the labor force. They're not impacting the market.

 You see the same kind of pattern with the great recession. A decline for people with and without disabilities and big decline for people with disabilities. And then you see some recovery and narrowing of the gap for people with disabilities, especially during 16 and 17, when we were ‑‑ the economy started to trip into full employment. People started re‑engaging in the labor force and looking for work.

 You start seeing all those want ads, help wanted signs in the ‑‑ in the shops, that's really, that full employment time. But not much progress over the last, prior to the pandemic in 2018 and 2019.

 We will see a big decline in February ‑‑ this is the February number ‑‑ this is all the numbers we have to date.

 You see the big decline for people without disabilities as people started exiting the labor market and then they jump back up but still haven't recovered back. For people with disabilities, you actually see, it's been pretty flat and into the pandemic. It's been pretty stable.

 Jumping around, that's perhaps due to sample size. But, people, for the most part, have stayed engaged in the labor market and this could be viewed as good news. Because they're either staying employed, they're looking for work, on temporary furlough, and then there's the idea that many people with disabilities may have been taking advantage of unemployment benefits.

 Now, prior to the pandemic, if you wanted unemployment insurance benefits, if you wanted insurance ‑‑ unemployment insurance payments, you had to be actively looking for work or on furlough. However, with the pandemic, you can be not on furlough, looking for work and have a condition that would make it dangerous for you to go back to work.

 That exemption, and the ability to get unemployment insurance may have stabilized and kept people with disabilities in the labor market. That could be a really good thing about that policy.

 That it, it, not just ‑‑ not only does it kind of support people who are working and now it's dangerous for them to go back to work because of immunocompromised conditions or something related to their condition, made them much more susceptible to COVID.

 That may be the reason, that may be one of the reasons why this line has stayed stable. If those unemployment, added unemployment benefits, both extended in the duration of time that unemployment insurance can take place, also, that exemption for people going back to work, you don't have to go back to work and you claim unemployment insurance if you have a health condition that makes you more susceptible, which isn't all people with disabilities.

 But, probably a fairly substantial portion. That may be what's keeping people in the labor force. And my big concern is that if those kinds of exemptions go away, we'll see a decline in labor force participation in the coming months.

 If I had to predict it, I have no idea, I don't know with the political and that's ‑‑ environment is going to be like in the next couple months, but Denise is here to answer all our questions about that.

 I'd also say that there is the mask mandates that are starting to come down across the country in various states. And if people with disabilities feel they're put at risk, maybe they had masks going on in the workplace, but now they feel even more compromised because the masks are starting to go away, both with clientele and with coworkers.

 That, as those mask mandates go away, some people with disabilities may go back to unemployment insurance, may start looking for a different job, and be unemployed or they may leave the labor force all together.

 So, I see those mask mandates as affecting a certain portion of the population with disabilities.

 Now, OSHA, and Denise may talk about this more later. OSHA, the Occupational Safety Health Administration is considering a nationwide mask mandate for the workplace, as a workplace safety issue.

 And that may kind of maintain people with disabilities in the labor market and working in a more‑safe environment for longer, if they have certain conditions.

 I'm going to stop there, because I know Denise and John are on the phone and I've been talking too long already. But, if you ‑‑ again, if you have questions, you can use the Q&A box. Our slides will be archived. But, you also can take a survey at our researchondisability.org/home/nTIDE and tell us things you'd like to address on this special nTIDE or additional nTIDE's in the future.

 I'm going to turn it to John and Denise. Do you have anything to say?

 >> Denise: Why don't I jump ‑‑ can you guys ‑‑ where's my video ‑‑ there we go ‑‑ why don't I jump ‑‑ since you referenced a couple policy things and I've been checking since we started talking, actually.

 A couple things to know ‑‑ there's lots going on in the policy space under the new legislation that just passed. So, I think I've said to this group before, on this call and on the beginning of the month calls. The American Rescue Plan does provide a 10% jump in FMAP for home and community‑based services for one year, which has some ramifications. You should know that.

 Adult children on the economic impact payments, the $1400 checks. This time, adult dependents who qualify, income‑wise, qualify, will get payments, that's a change.

 And there's some specific targeted funding to IDEA, so, there's some funding targeted under part B, under part C, separate funding. Part B, part C, and 619 program that's going to states. Around ‑‑ trying to get kids back to school.

 Now, on the unemployment piece, as Andrew said there, is extended unemployment, that you can apply for. The extension goes, interestingly enough, until Labor Day. And, it does include ‑‑ continue to include Andrew ‑‑ I just checked ‑‑ the ‑‑ that third exemption for people who ‑‑ for health reasons, under COVID, cannot go back to work.

 That does continue ‑‑ at least until that September date. That's the ‑‑ and it also includes the $300 increase in unemployment insurance ‑‑ I mean ‑‑ all the stuff that has ‑‑ had been through March is now through September, as I understand it.

 The other question you just asked about the OSHA stuff, my understanding is that the, any mask mandate, and including what we expects to come out of OSHA, will also include, basically an ADA exemption.

 I mean, ADA is a Civil Rights law. You can't just waive a Civil Rights exemption. There'll be things you have to show to be able to be under that, if you can't wear a mask. That piece, at least. If OSHA does come out with a mask mandate, overall, for the country, between those two things, that should help.

 That's, that's the answer to one of your other questions you have. A couple other things you should know, the ‑‑ in addition. The, under waivers, Medicaid waivers, there has been a whole conversation going on about work requirements, whether states could require, under a waiver, that somebody either work or volunteer or prove that they're trying to find a job, just to stay on Medicaid.

 The previous administration approved a couple of those and a number of other states had applied for them. Nothing had gone into effect yet, because there were lawsuits, including one that's supposed to be at the Supreme Court, shortly.

 What's happened, the Biden Administration has reversed all of that, has said, no, we're not going to enforce work requirements, they've asked the Supreme Court to basically drop the case, because it's now moot.

 The Supreme Court hasn't done that. They did pull the oral argument and postpone that and asked for additional briefing on the issues. For all the articles you may have been seeing in the news saying "whoo hoo! It's all over." It's not quite yet, but we're hopeful. The states in the Supreme Court opinion are Arkansas and New Hampshire.

 Apparently what happened was the administration asked Arkansas and New Hampshire to withdraw are the case because of these reasons. Arkansas refused. I'm not sure what New Hampshire did, actually. Arkansas refused to withdraw. So, that continues.

 We'll see. The whole argument is that, making a work requirement under Medicaid doesn't promote the reason of the Medicaid statute. Medicaid is for Health Care. Work is not required for that.

 The states where they had tried to do work requirements include ‑‑ in addition, include Georgia, Indiana, Nebraska, Ohio, South Carolina, Utah, Arizona, Michigan ‑‑ I had New Hampshire before ‑‑ and Wisconsin. They have been told the work requirement will no longer be required ‑‑ they cannot have a work requirement under their waiver.

 So, now, some of them are pushing back on that. That's what thinks been told. Did you say something ‑‑ Andrew ‑‑ okay. You should know that.

 The other one you should know, is the public charge requirement, where, basically, there was a conversation about whether, if you were on the public dole in way, you could be denied a variety of other services as an immigrant and that's also been reversed.

 So, some interesting things happening. We don't have all the answers yet. There clearly are changes being made from this administration, both by the new legislation and by pulling of regulations or guidances that have been out there.

 But, we don't have all the answers yet to what all those things will be.

 >> Andrew: Okay, John, any thoughts?
 >> John: Unfortunately, I lost my connection for a minute or two and I didn't hear your questions, but... anyway. I have been checking in with job paths, which is supported work program in New York City that I happen to sit on their board. And there've ‑‑ at least, last time we ‑‑ I talked to them, was in December. And they had about 28% of their participants, 69 out of 242 who were on furlough. And that's ‑‑ that's defined relatively loosely for them. It's basically where employers intend on taking them back.

 And currently, there are about 55 or 23% that remain on furlough.

 So, some people are going back to work. Not in great numbers. Quickly. There are a couple interesting, kind of unexpected benefits to being working. During the COVID era for people with disabilities, at least in the support work program.

 For example, many of these folks work in companies in positions where there's quite a bit of turnover. But they've been in those jobs for a long time and they have seniority. They're some of the first to pass back into jobs. A lot of people going back to jobs that may have ‑‑ or enter new jobs that may have orientation requirements.

 Because these individuals, during the epidemic, and haven't been working ‑‑ they've been on "furlough." The job path has been doing quite a bit of career development virtually with these folks. Which has sort of stabilized the organization's income, but it's also been a plus, because many of these folks, as they go back to work, are being, are being oriented remotely.

 And, and they, now, have tablets and internet connection that they probably wouldn't have had prior. That's been an advantage in terms of returning to work, particularly when organizations are requiring orientation, remotely. Those are a couple thoughts. Some of the sectors owning up are the sports and entertainment venues are beginning to open up.

 Not the theaters, not Broadway ‑‑ but others. And... people are going back to work in those sectors to some degree, slowly, but they're going back to that. Also, families are still hesitant, particularly families living in, in the burgs in relatively small quarters. Parents are hesitant for those folks to take public transportation to their jobs and they're refusing for their adult offspring to return to work. Even if vaccines are ‑‑ even after folks have been vaccinated. That's some news from the ‑‑ from the local community.

 >> Andrew: It shows a lot of context that families are facing. This is a very different world of making decisions about the family and about employment and about income. Denise, you were about to say something?
 >> Denise: I was. Only because we got a question that I answered, in the ‑‑ by typing, but I thought, probably other people are asking this question as well. We've gotten it before. The $1400 check doesn't, doesn't count as an asset for eligibility. It doesn't count against SSDI or Medicaid eligibility. I want to make sure I say that out loud to everybody else.

 >> Andrew: I was going to reread that because I saw your answer go in. We need to have that answered live. The first question was, do we know much about the persistent unemployment for people with disabilities is due to the fear of greater susceptibility to severe COVID reaction.

 That's an interesting question. And I looked at the ‑‑ they added some questions about COVID to the labor survey that we use for nTIDE. Whether someone is susceptible is not addressed in these questions. So many good questions, I'd imagine, it's probably one of the ones they considered asking. We ‑‑ and I looked at another survey that Census Bureau is doing and none of the questions get exactly to someone's susceptibility. They talk about fear of COVID.

 But we don't know whether they're a person with a disability. In that survey. We don't have ‑‑ well, they're a person with a disability and they have a fear. They just talk about general fear of COVID. Not in relation to your personal health circumstances or family member's health circumstances. There doesn't seem to be data that I know of. It's a really, really important question.

 And you know, unfortunately, with the unemployment insurance claims, we don't know what, the degree to which somebody ‑‑ we don't get data from them about disability either.

 So, it's, it's kind of a missing gap and there'll be some important public comment periods coming up in the future. About health equity. And I know that our, our good friend Annette Boratto [phonetic] is part of the health equity group that the Biden Administration has put together to talk about the future and what kind of information we need ‑‑

 No worries, Denise. I think this is an important question about people's susceptibility. The U.S. has a lot of privacy considerations in all these surveys, they're all kind of limited to the degree to which we can attach really detailed health information to.

 So, sorry, I don't have an answer ‑‑ I think, do we know how much persistent unemployment, people with disabilities have greater fear of susceptibility. We don't have such information, sorry to say.

 Are there any changes in industries where people with disabilities are working? I have many clients working for state and county programs for the first time, due to the ability to work from home.

 So, that is one of the questions that has been asked in the survey we're working with. I know that folks at the office of disability unemployment policy are analyzing that data and I wish I remembered their responses. So, if you e‑mail us, I can follow‑up and send you some information about that, but... if I remember their results correctly, that there has been some benefit, but not, not ‑‑ there's been some benefit to opening up work from home.

 Whether it's in addition to what would have happened without the pandemic, I think that's hard to say.

 So, sorry, I don't have too much of an answer for that one. I think some of the ODEP stuff would be of interest to you.

 All right, so, I see a lot of people choosing to retire and not return to jobs for safety reasons or they have moved their ‑‑ or moved their retirement dates in order ‑‑ and not returned to work.

 This may not be the case for people with disabilities and should be noted in the comparison.

 Yeah, that's a really interesting question. There is a way ‑‑ unfortunately, when they ask people, why are you not looking for work? Why are you not working? They give people a choice of disability or retirement or some other reason. If they let them choose to ‑‑ we don't ‑‑ a lot of people may say "I'm retiring because of my disability." This is one of those cases, instead of a single option ‑‑ I wish they allow people to answer both questions.

 But, people with disabilities are, in general, older. One way we could potentially look at this is by looking at, say... we typically use the number that the BLS uses. Ages 16 to 64 is our age range.

 We could look at 16 to, say, 55. And that would kind of peel that out. That's a really interesting idea. That early retirement, I know that many employers, in order to reduce payrolls ‑‑ University of New Hampshire did this ‑‑ we offered early buyout packages to people and most people, over 55, now that I'm 54, almost 55, you know, disability has onset with age as well.

 Unfortunately, in our data, we're not able to look at people who have late onset versus early onset. Onset is a big, missing variable in this.

 So, thank you, John, for your question. Susan has a statement, a comment. Personal experience is that changes to unemployment requirements have kept my family member with a disability as employed.

 This has been very empowering factor for my adult daughter during the pandemic. She has, she had to stop working as a personal care assistant last March because her compromised immune system.

 Working as a PCA was the soul, major empowering factor in our life. Thank you for advocating for change and unemployment policy. She's still part of the labor market, right? She's, she's, you know, the idea's that when the pandemic is over, there's an expectation she'll go back to work as a personal care assistant.

 And you know, I see that, that, you know, my own personal experience ‑‑ I have a family member who is very similar. With immune compromise. And very similar experience. Kind of keeps people ‑‑ the expectation is still of work. And you're a part.

 Even if you're conservative, on the conservative side of the political spectrum, there's the expectation that people go back to work. If you're on the liberal side of the spectrum, people are staying engaged in society and so, employment of people with disabilities is very much a bi‑partisan deal, right?

 Paying taxes and integrated into society. It's not surprising that the ADA was a bi‑partisan ‑‑ I might be overspeaking ‑‑ I'm not big on politics. It was signed by a republican president. So, George Bush. Senior.

 So, all right... still grappling with how to explain this data to the media. How ‑‑ how would you simply explain how COVID has impacted people with disabilities in the workforce? I need a dumbed‑down answer. I think the answer is ‑‑ all right ‑‑ let me keep it ‑‑ John and Denise, you guys can keep thinking of clean sentences.

 All right, so, I would say that people ‑‑ both people with and without disabilities, people with disabilities have been hit by the pandemic. Like as everyone else has.

 So, it's not a big, different story. There's evidence to suggest that the decline in employment was larger for people with disabilities. In the initial hit. In April and May. Percentage‑wise. That's the case.

 Percentage‑point wise, not so much. Given that people with disabilities were already low, the proportion of work in people who declined ‑‑ all right, let's start again.

 The employment of people with disabilities was, was hit by people with and without disabilities, equally. In April. With some evidence it was deeper for people with disabilities. A lot of improvement occurred for people without disabilities. Through the summer and into the fall, up until the holiday season hit.

 Unfortunately, people without ‑‑ with disabilities, that improvement really stopped, appeared to have stopped during the early to mid‑summer, after April and May. And maybe into June, there was some improvement. There hasn't been much improvement since. There's big concern ‑‑ I'm trying to ‑‑ I'm trying to come up with a ‑‑ a single word ‑‑ Elaine Katz and I, and John, and Denise and others talked earlier today. There's a concern about ‑‑ here's the term. Rematching, right?

 So, rematching. So, many people with disabilities are in customized‑type jobs, very‑specific, have workplace accommodations and as the economy and the health environment improves, with COVID, and the vaccines rolling out, there's a concern that A, it's been so long. It's almost a full year for many people that have been out of work. Out of the workplace.

 That rematching them to jobs might be difficult. You know? So, if you think of John's example, was, there was seniority attached to who got invited back to workforce. If you're invited back to work and have a health condition and can't do it, someone else might come in before you. Is your job going to be there? Many firms have learned to work with less employees. There may be this rematching problem ‑‑ this reintegration problem.

 Elaine made the point that the employment rates for people with disabilities hasn't changed much over the last 30 years. If you look at the long‑term trend, other than the business cycle, the only improvement within that gap, only in 2016 and 2017 did we really see it narrowing.

 And so, it's been really long‑term. Also, Elaine mentioned in her comments that there's been some actionality to this. That certain populations, urban and ‑‑ not urban ‑‑ ethnic and, ethnic ‑‑ well, they've certainly been true for urban, royal, suburban, there's been differences. There's been work at Rutgers university. Doug Cruz has teased these things out by racial and ethnic minority status.

 So, how did I do, Lynne? Did I answer, did I give you a succinct answer enough? It's hard to do this, kind of, over time, discussion. Big hit in the beginning. Some evidence that it was a little bigger for people with disabilities. There hasn't been much movement for people with disabilities since summer. People without disabilities, it went into ‑‑ still struggling. Oh, c'mon, Lynne. Go back to the recording. I said it all right.

 All right... so... John. Denise, any final comments?
 >> Denise: No. There's lots, still, to figure out. I think that's the question ‑‑ keep watching, there's more coming and we're just going to have to see. There's a new return to work bill that we're going to see soon that, you know, we'll see. There's some disability language in it, but I don't know how that will play out yet.

 >> Yeah.

 >> And it has to pass. There's another piece. There's an apprenticeship bill out there that we hope will be helpful. Again, it has to pass and there's disability language in it. You're just going to have to keep watching.

 >> Yeah.

 >> I will say ‑‑ this administration ‑‑ it does have disability on the, on the agenda as we look at all of this.

 >> Yeah.

 >> And there's someone in a disability‑specific position on the domestic policy council at the White House. I'm not trying to be political about this at all, but that helps. Having somebody on the Council helps. We'll have to watch and see.

 >> Who is that person?
 >> Kim Kanexta [phonetic]. She worked for representative Bobby Scott in the House and worked for Senator Murray in the Senate and is now disability person on the Disability Policy Connection at the White House. It's the first time, there's been a disability‑specific person. It's a really big deal and Kim is really talented and gets who we are and what we want.

 >> Andrew: The Domestic Policy Council is really high level. On the same level as the National Security Council. It spins around in the background and never really hits the media like the NSA ‑‑ not NSA. National Security Council.

 >> John: One last thought in terms of return to work, there are some ‑‑ in New York State, the Development Disability Agency is funding on‑the‑job training. They're incentivizing to bring people back to their jobs.

 >> At the state level.

 >> John: Correct. Also, they pride their relationships with their employers and for individuals that are not returning, because of whatever reason they have or their families have, they've been filling those jobs with other people. Thus, maintaining the relationship, the demand side relationship.

 So, I think that's really, really wise.

 >> Denise: Mm‑hmm.

 >> Andrew: Yeah. Just, you know, I think the next couple months will ‑‑ it's a treacherous time. You know, and some of the proof is going to, you know, the proof is in the pudding. Or something hits the fan. I don't know about the acronym, but it'll be really challenging. I just ran across a component of the Rescue Act. Is that what we're going to call it? The Rescue Act?

 That, that the CDC has several billion dollars to go after health equity. And you know, some of this is health equity issue. About you know, not just access to Health Care, but access to healthy environment and healthy workplace. I got the message through people I know through OSHA. Some of these issues could be addressed with that money and it's going to be really fast‑acting.

 I think the applications are due at the end of March. Unfortunately, it's only big states and cities and counties.

 >> That's a good point. Looking at health equity ‑‑ again, all of the things we're seeing from CDC and we do have ‑‑ we are doing work with CDC around vaccine hesitancy and other things, all the work we're seeing from CDC certainly recognizes the health equity issues.

 For those of us that have been in the field for a long time, I'm not criticized CDC particularly, in general, that hasn't always been the case. That's important and the intersectionality of disability and race and ethnicity and location, geography and all of that. I think it's also something that, through this crisis, has been ‑‑ come to the fore in a way it hasn't before.

 >> Andrew: I'm optimistic we'll have some disability related uptick in regards to the vaccine. It hasn't been put out yet, but there are efforts to collect that data out there. I wouldn't be surprised to see disparities and inequity in the distribution. 30% of the population with disabilities live in a household or family in a poverty environment.

 And those are the areas in geographic location that's are being largely, struggling with distribution for vaccines. So, my guess is, once we get that data, and it will happen, knock on wood. But in the next couple months, there might be information about that vaccine hesitancy as well.

 Denise, we should talk at some point.

 >> Denise: Absolutely. Mm‑hmm. Okay.

 >> Andrew: There's one more question in the Q&A. John's point, job path relationship with employers is critical in success ‑‑ critical in the success rate in returning to work. Key lesson for future and job agencies and job developers. Yeah. And Lynne Bergman sent out a piece she's worked on.

 All right, so... everybody, thank you very much. And I think we're going to call it for the day. All right...

 >> Thank you.

 >> Andrew: Thank you all for sticking with us. Hope you found the data interesting and everything you wanted from data and more. Thank you, John, thank you Denise. Everybody, have a good afternoon.

 >> Bye, everybody.

 >> Bye‑bye.

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