

To the office of U.S. Representative Austin Scott

Re: HR 8884 (119th Congress), Removing Barriers to Work for Disabled Americans Act • Latest action (2026-07-23): Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.
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Office of record (Congress.gov): 2185 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC • (202) 225-6531

Work Opportunities and Savings Empowerment (WOSE) Act of 2025

The measure, as described from the official record: To increase employment among disabled Americans by reducing financial disincentives and administrative barriers in federal benefit programs, such as raising the asset limit and simplifying the work rules for SSDI and SSI recipients.

THE PROPOSAL

This Act establishes a five-year demonstration project within the Social Security Administration to increase the earnings threshold for disabled beneficiaries under Title II and Title XVI of the Social Security Act. For beneficiaries enrolled in the demonstration, the substantial gainful activity level is raised to \$2,190 per month (indexed for inflation), and the asset limit for SSI is raised to \$10,000 for individuals and \$20,000 for couples. Benefits are phased out gradually at a rate of \$1 for every \$3 of earnings above the threshold, until benefits cease entirely at 300% of the federal poverty level.

To support state-sponsored employment and training programs, the Act appropriates funds to the Department of Health and Human Services for competitive grants to states that establish voluntary, time-limited programs to provide job coaching, transportation assistance, and workplace accommodations for disabled individuals transitioning from benefits to work. States must match 20% of the grant funds. No state is required to participate.

The Act includes a sunset provision after five years, with a mandatory evaluation by the Government Accountability Office to assess the impact on employment rates, benefit costs, and participant well-being. The Social Security Administration shall report annually to Congress on the demonstration's progress. Federal funding for the grants is capped at \$500 million over five years, sourced from general revenue.

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS (VFA PROPOSAL)

Funding Source	General revenue from the U.S. Treasury, not from the Social Security trust funds
Funding Amount	\$500 million over five years for state grants, with administrative costs from SSA's existing appropriation
Sunset Years	5 years
Oversight Body	Government Accountability Office (GAO) for evaluation; Social Security Administration for program administration and annual reporting

Enforcement Mechanism	SSA shall adjust benefit calculations automatically; grant recipients must comply with reporting requirements or face clawback of funds; no private right of action
Effective Date	180 days after enactment

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States)
- Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 (To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers)
- Tenth Amendment (The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people)

Concerns with the measure as written:

- The original bill may rely on broad spending power without clear enumerated authority if it imposes conditions on states that are not voluntarily accepted.
 - If the bill mandates state action to change eligibility criteria for state-administered programs, it could violate the Tenth Amendment's anti-commandeering principle.
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WHY BOTH SIDES CAN BACK IT (VFA'S ASSESSMENT)

Democrats' priorities: protects disabled workers from poverty, reduces financial cliffs, ensures access to health care and support services. Republicans' priorities: promotes work and self-sufficiency, limits federal spending with a sunset and cap, uses competitive grants without mandates, requires state matching to encourage local responsibility.

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