

Opening Statement of Rep. Glenn Grothman (R-WI)  
Field Hearing  
"Work, Dignity, and Choice in Disability Employment"  
February 13, 2026

(As prepared for delivery)

Today's hearing examines the benefits, opportunities, and impact that section 14(c) of the *Fair Labor Standards Act* (FLSA) provides to workers with disabilities.

Work is not a dirty word. It is an opportunity for individuals to receive not only income, but dignity, purpose, and community engagement through their employment. Thanks to section 14(c), individuals with disabilities are able to enjoy many of these benefits by having greater opportunities to join the workforce.

Section 14(c) allows businesses and nonprofit organizations to employ workers who would otherwise be unable to find employment, often due to a severe disability, and pay them a commensurate wage.

Many organizations operating with a 14(c) certificate—approximately 93 percent of them—are community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). These CRPs provide more than employment—they provide rehabilitation services, training, skill development, and social

engagement, all of which are crucial for people with disabilities to lead healthy, productive lives.

Here in Wisconsin, we have more than 40 employers participating as 14(c) organizations, most of which are CRPs. I have been told by many of these organizations that, without section 14(c), they would likely be forced to lay off all employees and close their doors permanently. These facilities are remarkable and among my favorite places to visit. You see so many happy individuals thriving and learning new skills as they are surrounded by friends and a team that values them—it would be deeply disappointing to see these programs shut down.

In many cases, the goal for 14(c) workers is to receive these important skills, reach their full potential, and eventually transition to competitive integrated employment, where they can work full-time or part-time and receive wages and opportunities for advancement. Section 14(c) may serve as many people's only option to be a part of the workforce, but it can also serve as an important first step toward even greater opportunities.

Critics of 14(c) call for its removal entirely. In fact, the U.S. Department of Labor under President Biden attempted to phase out participation for employers operating under a 14(c) certificate. This attempt by the Biden administration was clear government overreach, plain and simple. Fortunately, that proposed rule was withdrawn by the Trump administration last July.

There are even Members on the Education and Workforce Committee actively fighting to see section 14(c) erased. What they do not seem to understand is that erasing 14(c) would erase people's jobs and would

take away the community and friends that they love, and if they were able to get another job, those employers would be unable to provide the community, services, and dignity afforded to their workers with disabilities under 14(c).

Witnesses today will discuss the importance of having continued access to 14(c) opportunities. They are here to advocate for workers, to represent 14(c) employers, and to share their personal experiences with loved ones who found opportunities through the program.

Today's hearing will highlight how section 14(c) works and will show that it provides opportunities for growth, stability, and social well-being for the people that need it most.