



U.S. ABILITYONE COMMISSION

December 7, 2018

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The Honorable Neil Romano
Chairman
National Council on Disability
1331 F Street, NW, Suite 850
Washington, DC 20004

Re: Correspondence to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission Chairperson dated November 28, 2018

Dear Chairman Romano:

I am writing in response to your letter dated November 28, 2018, transmitted to me via email on Monday, December 2, 2018. Thank you for sharing the National Council on Disability's (NCD) background and proposed timeline for your Cooperative Agreement recipient to contact the U.S. AbilityOne Commission to request interviews. An entrance letter of this nature aids me and the Commission in understanding both the genesis and the intent of the recent contact made by the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) to agency personnel.

We reviewed the information NCD provided and the proposed questions for the Agency, and NCD's intent and authority to conduct an evaluation of the AbilityOne Program via your Cooperative Agreement recipient, the NDRN, remains unclear. The "Notice of Contract Award: National Disability Rights Network" posted on the NCD website states that the project's primary objective includes "undertake an initial review of the AbilityOne Commission." Subsequently, the "Modification to the Cooperative Agreement" sent to the Commission on November 9, 2018, broadened the scope to "analyze AbilityOne" and included questions pertaining to both the Commission and the AbilityOne Program at large.

The Agency and the Commission's Office of the Inspector General have concerns about the appropriate legal authority of NCD to conduct this review on the Commission and Program as stated above, and whether your continued efforts constitute proper intergovernmental activities. In addition, there are potential conflicts and impairments that exist, as we understand you currently serve, or until very recently served, as a member of the Board of Directors of National Industries for the Blind (NIB), an AbilityOne-authorized Central Nonprofit Agency performing under the Commission's oversight.

The Commission is more than willing to share information and answer questions; however, given the nature of this review, we would like to understand why the engagement is not by, with, or properly coordinated through the Commission's OIG.



COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED
An Independent Federal Agency



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I would be happy to meet with you, either in person or by phone, to discuss our concerns about the NCD's authority, scope, and objectivity regarding the study. I have asked my staff to reach out to the members of the Senate Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee to offer them assistance with any information they would like about the AbilityOne Program.

Sincerely,



Thomas D. Robinson
Chairperson, Presidential Appointee

