First Race, Then Sex, Now Disability: The Fight Towards Increased and Equal Employment of Individuals With Disabilities

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FIRST RACE, THEN SEX, NOW DISABILITY: THE FIGHT TOWARDS INCREASED AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

By: Wallis Levy Granat*

INTRODUCTION

Think about a typical morning. 7:00 a.m.: You hear the dreaded alarm and moan as “Superstition” plays. You somehow manage to hit snooze and buy yourself another ten minutes of peaceful bliss. 7:10 a.m.: You roll over, turn the alarm off, and instinctually grab your iPhone. You check Facebook, your email, your Instagram, and your Chase bank account to make sure nothing has changed since you went to sleep. 7:15 a.m.: You reluctantly get out of bed and turn the lights on. 7:20 a.m.: You grab your favorite Tommy Hilfiger shirt and finish getting dressed. 7:25 a.m.: You turn on the television and Pirates of the Caribbean starring Kiera Knightley and Orlando Bloom is playing. 8:00 a.m.: You get in the car, check the traffic to work on Waze, and turn the radio on to hear that Justin Timberlake is playing the 2018 Super Bowl halftime show.

* Associate, Mendes & Mount LLP. Articles Editor, J. C.R. & ECON. DEV. 2018-2019. St. John’s University School of Law ’19. This paper is dedicated to Stacey, Steven, and Emory, to whom I would be nothing without.
You can thank Albert Einstein,1 Stevie Wonder, Alexander Graham Bell,2 Franklin D. Roosevelt,3 Thomas Edison,4 Tommy Hilfiger,5 Kiera Knightley,6 Orlando Bloom,7 and Justin Timberlake8 for making your morning possible. So why these particular people? Interestingly, they are all individuals with disabilities.9 While they defied the odds and went on to achieve greatness in their fields, many people with disabilities are not as fortunate.

Under federal disability nondiscrimination laws, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”),10 a person has a

1 See M. Alex Johnson, It’s Albert’s world. We just live in it., NBC NEWS, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7318567/ns/technology_and_science-science/t/its-alberts-world-we-just-live-it/#.Wf3VVLcAiOo4 (last updated Apr. 19, 2005, 12:06 PM) (explaining how Einstein is the reason we have alarm clocks and GPS signals); see also Hazel Muir, Einstein and Newton showed signs of autism, NEW SCIENTIST (Apr. 30, 2003), https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn3676-einstein-and-newton-showed-signs-of-autism/ (stating that while it is impossible to make a definite diagnosis of someone who is no longer alive, autism expert Simon Baron-Cohen believes that Albert Einstein suffered from Asperger syndrome).


7 See Meghan Neal, Dyslexia’s Special Club: Actor Orlando Bloom Speaks Out, HUFFPOST, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/06/09/dyslexias-special-club-ac_n_602380.html (last updated Nov. 17, 2011) (confirming that at the age of seven, Bloom was tested and diagnosed with dyslexia).


9 See Johnson, supra note 2; History of the FDIC, supra note 4; Traynor, supra note 5; Child, supra note 7; Neal, supra note 8; Weintraub, supra note 9.

disability if they (1) have “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;” (2) “have a record of such impairment; or” (3) are “regarded as having such an impairment.”

Today, people with disabilities represent the largest minority in the United States. In 2015, it was estimated that as high as 12.6% of Americans reported having a disability, which represents an increase from previous years. However, the Center for Disease Control (“CDC”) estimates that, 22% of adults living in the United States have a disability. As the largest minority, people with disabilities represent an important, yet often overlooked demographic, especially in the employment context.

Across the United States, people with disabilities represent “the largest source of untapped potential.” According to a 2017 Bureau of Labor Statistics Jobs Report, only 29.7% of working age

1990, the ADA “prohibits private employers, state and local governments, employment agencies and labor unions from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities in job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, job training, and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment.” Id. The Act applies to “employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments.” Id.

people with disabilities are employed. One survey conducted by the Department of Labor (“DOL”) in 2008 found that only 8.7% of companies had hired people with disabilities in the past year. Another survey of 219 Fortune 500 companies revealed that only 1 out of every 227, or 0.44%, of directors and executives had a disability. Even when qualified, people with disabilities are still less likely than their counterparts without disabilities to receive interest from employers. These statistics show that while employers say they are willing to hire people with disabilities, “their behavior is not consistent with their attitudes.”

The problem with these statistics is that while they show the employment rate of people with disabilities is grossly disproportionate to the employment rate of nondisabled people, they do not accurately depict the true number of people with disabilities. In 2017, 22% of Americans had a disability, yet only 29.7% of such individuals were employed. This was

20 See generally Katie Sola, Discrimination Against Disabled Applicants Sadly ‘Not Surprising’: NDRN Director, FORBES (Nov. 3, 2015, 4:59 PM), https://www.forbes.com/sites/katiesola/2015/11/03/discrimination-disabled-job/#6e01ab5f5331. The National Bureau of Economic Research submitted 6,016 fake applications to junior and senior positions at accounting firms. See id. One third mentioned having Asperger’s Syndrome, one third mentioned a spinal cord injury, and one third did not disclose anything. See id. The applicants without disabilities were 26% more likely to get interest from employers over their disabled peers. See id.
23 See CDC: 53 Million Adults in the US Live with a Disability, supra note 15.
24 See Frick, supra note 17.
compared to the 78% of Americans without disabilities, of which, 95.9% were employed.\textsuperscript{25} One reason for this problem is that disability is overlooked when discussing diversity in the employment context.\textsuperscript{26} This means that companies are not including disability in their hiring initiatives. Since 1980, the employment of other minority groups has increased while “labor force participation for U.S. persons with disabilities has decreased.”\textsuperscript{27} Additionally, “there are significantly fewer employee resource groups that target employees with disabilities (58%) vs. other diversity groups (78%).”\textsuperscript{28} The top four companies on Fortune’s 2016 list of 50 Best Places to Work for Diversity, include detailed statistics on sex and race.\textsuperscript{29} They do not, however, include any statistics about employees with disabilities.\textsuperscript{30} While many companies have diversity policies regarding race, ethnicity, and sex, the same is not true for disability.\textsuperscript{31} The companies that do include disability are in the minority.\textsuperscript{32} Additionally, the inequality in hiring can be attributed to the fact that people are uneducated about the extent of the problem since disability is not

\textsuperscript{25} See id.

\textsuperscript{26} See Aimee Picchi, Americans with Disabilities Still Can’t Land Jobs, CBS NEWS (July 26, 2017, 6:00 AM), https://www.cbsnews.com/news/americans-with-disabilities-still-can’t-land-jobs/ (“When it comes to the workforce, pushes for greater diversity often overlook disabilities.”). One of the United States’ leading research organizations, the Pew Research Center, conducts research on over 225 topics but not disability. See Blahovec, supra note 16.


\textsuperscript{30} See id.

\textsuperscript{31} See LESLIE PAGE WOLFSON, ASS’N CORP. COUNS., THE LAW VERSUS BEST PRACTICES: ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES INCLUSIVE IN YOUR DIVERSITY POLICIES? 64 (Oct. 2016) (“The idea of using well thought out, written, and documented best practices for diversity and inclusion is commonplace when dealing with race, ethnicity, and gender, but is noticeably absent when we study the population of people with disabilities.”).

\textsuperscript{32} See id.
tracked like other minorities. Without knowing the true number of individuals with disabilities or the true number of individuals with disabilities currently in the workforce, we cannot begin to solve the problem.

It is commonly said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. By this definition, America is insane. At least 22% of the American population has a disability, but are not reporting it out of fear. This silence keeps the public uneducated and unaware of the problem regarding the employment of individuals with disabilities. Since people do not know there is a problem, individuals with disabilities are not hired and not put in positions to make meaningful changes, thus resulting in the current problem repeating itself over and over again, which is insane.

However, this should not be the case, as today, it is illegal to discriminate on the basis of disability, just like it is for race and sex. In the eyes of the law, all three are protected equally. Not only are there laws in place designed solely to protect people with disabilities, there are more laws to protect people with disabilities alone than race and sex. The three most important laws protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities are the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ("ADA"), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), and the Rehabilitation

33 See generally McPhillips, supra note 23.
34 See CDC: 53 Million Adults in the US Live with a Disability, supra note 15.
35 See infra pp. 29-30 and note 181.
36 See Martin Luther King Jr., Address at Cornell College (Oct. 15, 1962) (transcript available at http://news.cornellcollege.edu/dr-martin-luther-kings-visit-to-cornell-college/) ("I am convinced that men hate each other because they fear each other. They fear each other because they don’t know each other, and they don’t know each other because they don’t communicate with each other, and they don’t communicate with each other because they are separated from each other.")
41 See 42 U.S.C. §§ 12102-12213.
Act of 1973. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. The IDEA requires public schools to make a free, appropriate public education available to all eligible children with disabilities, in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs. Finally, the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in the employment practices of federal contractors. There are also laws in place that protect all three: race, sex, and disability, such as the Fair Housing Act, which prohibits housing discrimination.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee because of the person’s race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. The Commission has recognized the importance of tracking minorities in the employment context since 1966, when it created the EEO-1 Report as a way to ensure employers were complying with the newly passed Civil Rights Act of 1964. The EEO-1 Report, otherwise known as The Employer Information Report, requires that companies list how many employees are male,

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44 See 42 U.S.C. §§ 12102-12213.
47 See 42 U.S.C. § 3604(a)-(f) (2018) Sections (a) through (e) of the Act make it unlawful “[t]o refuse to sell or rent after the making of a bona fide offer, or to refuse to negotiate for the sale or rental of, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, a dwelling to any person,” or “[t]o discriminate against any person in the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental of a dwelling, or in the provision of services or facilities in connection therewith, because of race, color, religion, sex, familial status, or national origin.” See id. Section (f) of the Act extends this coverage to individuals with disabilities. See id.
48 About EEOC: Overview, U.S. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EM. COMMISSION, https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/ (last visited Oct. 30, 2017). The EEOC has the power to investigate discrimination charges against employers covered under the law. See id. This includes most employers with at least fifteen employees. See id.
female, black or African Americans, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or two or more races. The EEO-1 Report must be filed by all private employers who are subject to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that have (1) 100 or more employees, (2) fewer than 100 employees but who are affiliated with another company that employs 100 or more employees, or (3) met certain requirements as a federal contractor. Currently, the EEO-1 Report is the only mandatory report employers must fill out regarding the diversity of their employees. As disability is not included, people remain in the dark about the true extent of the problem regarding the lack of employment of people with disabilities.

This note proposes that the EEOC should expand the EEO-1 Report to include the reporting of employees with disabilities by type of disability to help shed light on, and fix the lack of employment of people with disabilities. Part I of this Note discusses the history of the EEOC and the EEO-1 Report and the reasons why disability is similar to race and sex, which are currently included in the EEO-1 Report. Part II identifies three benefits companies can receive by employing individuals with disabilities. Part III explains how tracking the employment of people with disabilities is consistent with historical trends, the government’s stance on the issue, and the future of the workforce. Part IV argues that disability should be included in the EEO-1 Report and explains why it should be reported by type of disability. Finally, this Part will address any remaining counterarguments.

I. DISABILITY IS NOT THAT DIFFERENT FROM RACE AND SEX

The EEOC was originally created to stop discrimination based on race and sex. One year after its creation, the EEOC created the

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53 There are many types of disabilities. It is important to differentiate because each has its own unique characteristics.
EEO-1 Report to stop discriminatory practices. There are four main reasons why tracking disability in the report is the next logical step from tracking race and sex: anyone can become disabled at any time, there are more disabled people than there are members of any racial minority, disability is broader than race and sex, and the disability rights movement is similar to the civil rights and women’s rights movements.

A. The History of the EEOC and EEO-1 Report

The EEOC was established under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to enforce Title VII, which “prohibited discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, and retaliation.” Today, the EEOC is charged with enforcing any laws subsequently enacted that prevent discrimination based on disability. As discrimination charges continued to increase between 1965 and 1971, the EEOC realized it needed “a more wholesale assault on discriminatory practices.” In 1966, it authorized the reporting of employment status of minorities and women in private employment through the EEO-1 Report. The EEOC has since acknowledged that the report is “an invaluable tool to pinpoint possible zones of employment discrimination, and to identify major patterns of exclusion and discrimination practices in select industries, job categories, and geographic areas.” The data collected in the EEO-1 Report is used for “enforcement, self-

54 See Early Enforcement Efforts, supra note 50. After the first EEO-1 Reports were submitted, the EEOC sponsored a series of public hearings, which focused on the industries the reports identified as having the highest rates of exclusion and discrimination. Id.
55 See Pre 1965: Events Leading to the Creation of EEOC, U.S. EQUAL EMP. OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION, https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/pre1965/index.html. The Civil Rights Act “address[ed] not only discrimination in employment, but also discrimination in voting, public accommodation, and education as well.” See id. The EEOC became a five-member bipartisan commission with the “power to receive, investigate, and conciliate complaints where it found reasonable cause to believe that discrimination had occurred.” See id. It did not have power to bring its own suits. See id. It was not until 1972 when Congress approved the Equal Employment Opportunity Act that the EEOC was given the power to bring lawsuits against private companies. See id.
57 See Early Enforcement Efforts, supra note 50.
58 See id (requiring an EEO-1 Report for companies with 100 or more employees).
59 See id.
assessment by employers, and research.” It is also “shared with other authorized federal agencies in order to avoid duplicate collection of data and reduce the burden placed on employers.”

B. Reasons Disability Should Be Reported Like Race and Sex

There are four reasons why tracking disability, in addition to race and sex, makes sense. First, disability is more permeable than race and sex. Individuals may go from the status of disabled to nondisabled “with the help of biomedicine or rehabilitation,” and “anyone can become disabled at any time, and, barring sudden or accidental death, most people will eventually become disabled to a significant degree.” It has been said that disability is an “open club where anyone can join at any time, not by choice, but by circumstances.” In today’s day and age, even “immutable” traits, like sex, are subject to change. Just as anyone can become disabled at any time, one can voluntarily change his or her sex, thus making disability even more like sex.

Second, there are more people with disabilities than there are members of any given racial minority in the United States. The

60 See EEO Reports / Surveys, supra note 53.
61 Id. (“Although the data is confidential, aggregated data is available to the public.”)
63 Id.
66 See Janell Ross, How easy is it to change the sex on your birth certificate?, WASH. POST (May 18, 2016, 7:30 AM), https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/05/18/the-next-frontier-in-the-bathroom-law-debate-changing-birth-certificates/?utm_term=.148f58be8ed7. “10 states . . . allow individuals who can provide a notarized doctors note that a person has received the treatment deemed necessary by the individual and their doctor to live their life in a way that is consistent with their gender identity to do so.” Id. This is the same “standard that is required by the Social Security Administration for Social Security cards, as well as U.S. passports and birth certificates.” Id.
67 See CDC: 53 Million Adults in the US Live with a Disability, supra note 15; QuickFacts: United States, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045217 (last visited Jan. 11, 2018). The Census Bureau found that 13.4% of the American population was Black or African American and 5.9% were Asian. QuickFacts: United States supra.
largest racial minority as of July 1, 2016, was Hispanic or Latino, which only made up 17.8% of the American population as compared to the disabled population that consists of at least 22%.

Third, disability is broader in the sense that both race and sex are encompassed within disability. “Disability is fundamental also in that it may ‘trump’ other minority statuses. That is, for people who differ in more than one way from the hegemonic identity (middle-class white male heterosexual normate), certain impairments—such as blindness or deafness—may function as their ‘master’ status, their primary defining characteristic.” In many instances, individuals with disabilities consider their disability to be their primary defining characteristic because it has a greater impact on their life than their race or sex.

Fourth, the disability rights movement is often compared to the civil rights movement and the women’s rights movement in that it “followed a similar pattern . . . challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes, rallying for political and institutional change, and lobbying for the self-determination of a minority community.” In comparing the movements to each other, it strengthens the claim for including disability. Margaret Price, assistant professor at

68 See Id.
69 See CDC: 53 Million Adults in the US Live with a Disability, supra note 15.
70 See generally Coeur, supra note 63, at 96, 100-01. “Furthermore, because of the way this minority is constituted, it is arguably more heterogeneous than those of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. Disabilities may affect one’s senses or one’s mobility; they may be static or progressive, congenital or acquired, formal (affecting the shape of the body) or functional, visible or invisible.” Id. at 96. However, “precisely because disability constitutes the one minority anyone can join, it may be the form of diversity that generates the most anxiety and discomfort in others. Id. at 101.
71 Id. at 97.
73 EUNYOUNG KIM & KATHERINE C. AQUINO, DISABILITY AS DIVERSITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION 7 (Eunyoung Kim & Katherine C. Aquino eds., 2017) (“Students with disabilities, similar to students from traditionally racially and ethnically marginalized groups, face the vulnerabilities these stereotypes threaten.”).
74 See generally Pamela Brandwein & Richard K. Scotch, The Gender Analogy in the Disability Discrimination Literature, 62 OHIO ST. L.J. 465, 466-68 (2001). Comparing gender to disability helps legitimize the disability claim. Id. at 467. Since “we learn by importing understandings from one context to another . . . [I]n sights about one area of
Spelman College, “found that students at Spelman are eager to compare the experiences of disability and racial oppression.” One student explained how the disability movement and civil rights movement are similar in that freedom and justice for all, are seen in both. Additionally, individuals with disabilities are often incorrectly stereotyped like people of different races. One stereotype is that all people with disabilities or all people with a specific disability are the same. “People are so afraid of variety that they try to fit everything into a tiny little box with really specific labels.”

There are ten commonly recurring stereotypes in the media about people with disabilities that have been perpetuated since the 1960’s. These stereotypes include the disabled person as pitiable and pathetic, as an object of curiosity or violence, as sinister or evil, as the super cripple, as atmosphere, as laughable, as her/his own worst enemy, as a burden, as non-sexual, and as difference may be relevant and instructive to other areas of difference. Indeed, law often proceeds by analogy.


76 See id. (“Just as the Civil Rights Movement was a movement protesting unequal treatment and limited access (Jim Crow laws), the disability movement is one demanding recognition of human equality and value.”)

77 See Myths and Facts About People with Disabilities, EASTERSEALS, http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/facts-about-disability/myths-facts.html (last visited Jan. 11, 2019). There are many stereotypes that are incorrect regarding individuals with disabilities. Id. Such as, they do not want to discuss their disability, they lead very different lives than people who are not-disabled, and they are victims or heroes for overcoming their disability. Id.


79 People tend to diagnose autism with really specific check-box descriptions, but in reality, it’s a whole variation as to what we’re like. For instance, my little brother, he’s very severely autistic. He’s nonverbal. He can’t talk at all. But I love to talk. People often associate autism with liking math and science and nothing else, but I know so many autistic people who love being creative. But that is a stereotype, and the stereotypes of things are often, if not always, wrong. For instance, a lot of people think autism and think Rain Man immediately. That’s the common belief, that every single autistic person is Dustin Hoffman, and that’s not true. But that’s not just with autistic people, either. I’ve seen it with LGBTQ people, with women, with POC people. People are so afraid of variety that they try to fit everything into a tiny little box with really specific labels.

Rosie King, How autism freed me to be myself, TED (2014), https://www.ted.com/talks/rosie_king_how_autism_freed_me_to_be_myself/transcript#t-12974.

being unable to participate in daily life. Thus, disability should be tracked the same as race and sex because in addition to sharing many similarities, it also impacts more people.

II. WHY YOUR NEXT EMPLOYEE SHOULD HAVE A DISABILITY

Increasing the number of qualified employees with disabilities in the workforce has numerous benefits. First, hiring people with disabilities can have a positive impact on other workers as well as help retain and gain new customers. Second, there are currently three existing tax programs that employers can qualify for when they hire people with disabilities. Finally, people with disabilities make for good employees, which makes for good business.

A. Disabled Employees Have a Positive Impact on Clients and Other Employees

One study found that overall, 92% of consumers are more favorable to companies who hire individuals with disabilities, and 87% specifically said they would rather give their business to a company that hires individuals with disabilities. By hiring employees with disabilities, companies can tap into the $544 billion in annual disposable income that is controlled by people with disabilities. Including friends and family of people with disabilities, that number increases to $6.9 trillion. Walgreens stated that “because of our investing efforts in employing individuals with [intellectual or developmental disabilities] at the retail locations, customers often tell us that Walgreens has become their pharmacy of choice.” When a company hires an individual

81 See id.
82 See infra Part II(A).
83 See infra Part II(B).
84 See infra Part II(C).
86 See Gaudiano, supra note 16.
87 Id.
with disabilities, it sends a message to the disabled community and their friends and family that, as a group, they are valued.

Additionally, non-disabled employees benefit from the hiring of people with disabilities. Non-disabled employees can learn how to make the workplace more inclusive, new ways to approach things, new ways of thinking about things, and how to be more empathetic to people (including people with disabilities and customers). Individuals with disabilities are thought of as enduring greater conflict, and it is proven they can have a positive influence on those enduring less conflict. “[T]hus, employees with disabilities can be a motivation to their co-workers. This can help encourage employees to be more empathetic towards people undergoing hardships, including your customers.”

**B. Three Tax Reasons to Hire Individuals with Disabilities**

There are currently three tax incentive programs that employers can apply for when hiring qualified individuals with disabilities. First, the disabled access credit provides a credit to “eligible small business[es]” who incur “reasonable” expenditures in providing access to persons with disabilities. Second, “[t]he Architectural Barrier Removal Tax Deduction encourages businesses of any size to remove architectural and transportation barriers to the mobility of persons with disabilities and the


89 See Sandy Murillo, Top 5 Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities, CHI. LIGHTHOUSE (Oct. 6, 2016), http://chicagolighthouse.org/sandys-view/top-5-benefits-hiring-people-disabilities/ (explaining the positive impact disabled workers can have on other employees).

90 See generally id.

91 See 7 Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities, DISABILITYCAMPAIGN.ORG, http://disabilitycampaign.org/media/filer_public/38/a4/38a4890a-fde0-41ec-8db7-d7a22f3c0ff8/7-benefits-of-hiring-a-person-with-a-disability.pdf (last visited Jan. 11, 2018) (explaining how the hardships individuals with disabilities face can be a tool to help those who have not faced hardships).

92 Id.


elderly.”95 Finally, the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (“WOTC”) “provides employers [financial] incentives” in the form of tax credits “for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.”96

C. People with Disabilities Make Good Employees

Study after study has shown that employers are happy with their employees who have disabilities.97 In one survey, three-fourths of employers said that their employees with disabilities ranked “good or very good on work quality, motivation, engagement, integration with co-workers, dependability, and attendance.”98 Another study “found that workers with disabilities had a turnover rate 48% lower than that of the nondisabled population, with medical costs 67% lower and time-off expenses 73% lower.”99 Finally, the Office of Disability Employment Policy100 has endorsed individuals with disabilities by stating

95 Tax Benefits for Businesses Who Have Employees with Disabilities, supra note 94; see 26 U.S.C.S. § 190 (“A taxpayer may elect to treat qualified architectural and transportation barrier removal expenses which are paid or incurred by him during the taxable year as expenses which are not chargeable to capital account. The expenditures so treated shall be allowed as a deduction.”).

96 Tax Benefits for Businesses Who Have Employees with Disabilities, supra note 94; see 26 U.S.C.S. § 51 (“An individual is a member of a targeted group if such individual is – a vocational rehabilitation referral,” [which means] “any individual who is certified by the designated local agency as – having a physical or mental disability, for such individual, constitutes or results in a substantial handicap to employment.”).


98 Picciuto, supra note 98. See 7 Benefits of Hiring People with Disabilities, supra note 92, at 2 (“Employees with disabilities bring unique skills, experiences, and understanding that can enhance your products and services. Their knowledge of assistive technology and other innovations can help your company increase productivity . . . [f]urthermore, people with disabilities make good team players as they are accustomed to working in collaboration with others, such as caregivers or physicians, to achieve a goal; they may do very well in positions that require partnerships and collaboration.”).

99 Cann, supra note 98 (discussing the study by the American Society of Safety Engineers on its distribution centers).

100 About ODEP, OFF. DISABILITY EMP. POL’Y, U.S. DEP’T LAB., https://www.dol.gov/odep/about/ (last visited Oct. 30, 2017) (“The Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is the only non-regulatory federal agency that promotes policies and coordinates with employers and all levels of government to increase workplace success for people with disabilities.”).
that, [p]erhaps more than any other group of people, individuals with disabilities have the ability to adapt to different situations and circumstances. As employees, they add to the range of viewpoints businesses need to succeed, offering fresh ideas on how to solve problems, accomplish tasks and implement strategies.

Thus, to stay competitive and even get ahead, companies should strongly consider hiring individuals with disabilities.

III. SOCIETAL TRENDS CALL FOR THE TRACKING OF EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

There are three main reasons why tracking disability is important and consistent with societal trends. First, tracking race and sex reduced the number of discrimination charges filed, and including disability will likely have the same effect. Second, it would be consistent with prior and current government action designed to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities. Third, the workforce will soon consist primarily of millennials who consider disability just as important as race and sex.

A. Tracking Race and Sex Lowered the Number of Discrimination Charges and the Same Could Be True for Disability

Due to the high number of disability related charges consistently filed with the EEOC, the government should be tracking disability the same way it does race and sex. “In 1971, a New York judge described people with disabilities as ‘the most discriminated [against] minority in our nation.’” In its 1984 report to Congress, the National Council on Disability stated that “disability discrimination accounted for the largest amount of

101 Diverse Perspectives, supra note 13.
102 See infra Part III(A).
103 See infra Part III(B).
104 See infra Part III(C).
In 1994, two years after the passage of the ADA, “disability related charges constitute[d] 20.7[%] of all charges filed with the [EEOC].” In 2016, there were more charges filed with the EEOC for disability discrimination than sex discrimination. The numbers show that, in 2016, 35.3% of all charges filed were race related, 29.4% were sex related, and 30.7% were disability related. While the number of race and sex related charges has continued to drop over the years, disability charges has been on the rise since 2002. The tracking of race and sex in private employment via the EEO-1 Report is therefore one of the reasons for the decline in the number of discrimination charges and it can be inferred that the same would be true for disability.

**B. Tracking Disability is Consistent with the Actions of the Government**

Over the years, the government has demonstrated its commitment to the employment of individuals with disabilities. It logically follows from the government’s actions that adding disability to the EEO-1 Report is the next step. In 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order 13548 to increase the federal employment rate of individuals with disabilities. Obama called on federal agencies to hire an additional 100,000 people with disabilities over a five-year period. In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was put into place, making the employment of people with disabilities a national priority. Additionally, the employment of people with disabilities has dropped each year since 2002 except for 2008. Id.

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109 Id.
110 See id. The number of charges filed relating to race have continued to drop since 2008 and gender since 2012. Id. Disability charges have dropped each year since 2002 except for 2008. Id.
112 See id.
consistently been a bipartisan issue that continues to be discussed regardless of which party is in control.\textsuperscript{114}

Additionally, the DOL’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (“ODEP”) has several programs in place that are designed to help increase the employment rate of individuals with disabilities.\textsuperscript{115}

First, the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion is a “service that educates employers about effective strategies for recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing people with disabilities.”\textsuperscript{116} Second, the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities “connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs.”\textsuperscript{117} Third, “the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) provides free, expert advice on workplace accommodations that may be necessary to assist qualified individuals with disabilities apply for a job and maximize their productivity once onboard.”\textsuperscript{118} Finally, “the Campaign for Disability Employment offers a variety of media assets, including video public service announcements, all designed to encourage employers and others to recognize the value and talent people with disabilities add to America’s workplaces and economy.”\textsuperscript{119} Thus, in creating these programs, the federal government has shown its commitment to increasing the employment rate of individuals with disabilities, and now disability in the workforce must be tracked to measure and ensure the success of these programs.

\textsuperscript{114} See Alison Barkoff & Emily B. Read, \textit{Employment of People with Disabilities: Recent Successes and an Uncertain Future}, 42 \textit{A.B.A. Hum. Rts. Mag.} (discussing how most action taken to increase the employment rate of people with disabilities is a result of bipartisan efforts, including the ADA, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and Achieving a Better Life Experience Act).


\textsuperscript{116} Id.


\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Hiring People with Disabilities}, supra note 116.

\textsuperscript{119} Id.
C. Tracking Disability is Consistent with the Attitudes of Millennials: The Future of the Workforce

Millennials are defined as people born between 1981-2000.120 Today, more than one in three employees is a millennial, making them the largest share of the American workforce.121 It is estimated that by 2025, they will make up 75% of the workforce.122 Millennials and the ODEP share the same view: “although the term [diversity] is most often used to refer to differences among individuals such as ethnicity, sex, age and religion,” the definition is broader and encompasses people with disabilities.123 In addition to having an expansive definition of diversity, millennials mark the first generation to feel they do not have to hide their differences to advance in the workplace.124 A survey conducted by Deloitte University Leadership Center for Inclusion found that millennials are 21% more likely than other age groups to disagree with the statement that they must shield their identities at work.125 Another study found that almost half of millennials give importance to a diverse work environment in their job search.126 Finally, one study found that 64% of millennials are comfortable discussing diversity in the workforce, which is higher than any other generation.127 Therefore, tracking the employment statistics of individuals with disabilities is not only vital to ensuring that the past does not repeat itself but is also consistent with the

121 See Sarab Kochhar, Millennials@Work: Perspectives on Diversity & Inclusion, INST. FOR PUB. REL., (Dec. 6, 2016), http://www.instituteforpr.org/millennialswork-perspectives-diversity-inclusion/.
123 See Diverse Perspectives, supra note 13.
124 See CHRISTIE SMITH & STEPHANIE TURNER, THE RADICAL TRANSFORMATION OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION THE MILLENNIAL INFLUENCE, 15 (2015) (“Millennials are refusing to check their identities at the doors of organizations today, and they strongly believe these characteristics bring value to the business outcomes and impact.”).
125 See id.
126 See Kochhar, supra note 122.
127 See id.
federal government’s dedication to hiring more disabled workers and the future of the American workforce.

IV. THE PROPOSAL: INCREASING THE EMPLOYMENT RATE OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WILL NOT HAPPEN UNLESS AND UNTIL EMPLOYERS ARE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS

Because of the inadequacy of statistics on the employment of people with disabilities in the private sector and the low percentage of individuals with disabilities hired, this note proposes that the EEO-1 Report should track the number of employees with disabilities by type of disability to ensure the greatest chance of increasing the employment rate of individuals with disabilities. Tracking disability should be done according to a five-year plan, which phases in different types of disabilities. The tracking will hold employers accountable for their employment decisions and ultimately lead to the increased hiring and promotion of individuals with disabilities, as it did with race and sex. Finally, although critics argue that tracking disability could have several negative consequences, these arguments are without merit.

A. Why Statistics are Needed to Prove and Solve the Problem

1. The Data That Exists Won’t Solve the Problem

According to the DOL, “credible, consistent data is critical to creating change.”128 For example, in the legal field, while there are general employment statistics on the employment of individuals with disabilities, there are significantly less statistics than other

128 Disability Employment Statistics, U.S. DEP’T LAB., https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/DisabilityEmploymentStatistics.htm (last visited Jan. 11, 2018); see also Joyce E.A. Russell, How to create change in the workplace, WASH. POST (Dec. 1, 2013), https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/how-to-create-change-in-the-workplace/2013/11/27/9d62f8de-5548-11e3-835d-e7173847c7cc_story.html?utm_term=.602c927cc892. John Kotter is known for his eight-step process for positive changes. Step one is to create a sense of urgency around the need to change. A good way to show the need for change is through data, which must be strong enough to enable people to give extra effort to go beyond the status quo. See Russell, supra note 129.
categories like race and sex.\textsuperscript{129} The first time the government officially tracked the employment of individuals with disabilities was in 2008; however, it was and is not adequate.\textsuperscript{130} First, in 2008, the ODEP conducted the Survey of Employer Perspectives on the Employment of People with Disabilities.\textsuperscript{131} While it was the first comprehensive survey that examined the “employer side of issues related to recruiting, hiring, advancing and retaining people with disabilities,” it was a one-time study.\textsuperscript{132} The study highlighted the fact that most employment statistics regarding the employment of people with disabilities come from “nationally representative surveys.”\textsuperscript{133}

Second, other surveys have been voluntary, and therefore, the data may not be complete. For example, additional questions were added to the monthly Current Population Survey (“CPS”), to help determine the employment status of people with disabilities in 2008.\textsuperscript{134} This marked the first time the “labor force status of people with disabilities” was officially tracked.\textsuperscript{135} Conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the CPS is, a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 households that provides statistics on employment and unemployment in the United States. The collection of data on persons with a disability is sponsored by the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy.\textsuperscript{136}

The problem with the CPS is that participation is voluntary and participants do not need to, or often do not, answer any question


\textsuperscript{130} See CESSI, supra note 19 at 6.

\textsuperscript{131} See id. at 1. “ODEP conducted a 15-minute telephone survey of a representative sample of senior executives representing 12 industries by company size: small (5-14 employees), medium (15-249 employees), and large companies (250 or more employees),” in twelve different industries. Id.

\textsuperscript{132} See id. The survey was “designed to provide a source of nationally representative statistics on the employment of people with disabilities from the perspective of employers.” Id.

\textsuperscript{133} See id. These surveys include “the Survey of Income and Program Participation, American Community Survey, National Health Interview Survey, and soon the Current Population Survey.” Id.

\textsuperscript{134} See Disability Employment Statistics, supra note 129.

\textsuperscript{135} See id.

they deem “too personal,” which includes questions about disability.\textsuperscript{137}

\textbf{2. How Releasing Diversity Data Leads to Change}

While some companies have internal diversity initiatives in place, they are not working, which is why it is time for the EEOC to include disability, thus forcing employers to join the twenty-first century.\textsuperscript{138} Currently, the EEOC cannot release data derived from compliance surveys (like the EEO-1 Report); however, employers can choose to publicly release the information, which is what began happening in 2014.\textsuperscript{139} Due to increasing pressure that escalated in 2013 by current and former employees, shareholders, government agencies, political activists, and the public at large, many companies began publicly releasing this information.\textsuperscript{140} In


\textsuperscript{138} See Stephanie Russell-Kraft, \textit{Companies Use Diversity Data to Hold Law Firms Accountable}, BLOOMBERG BIG LAW BUS. (Apr. 3, 2017), https://biglawbusiness.com/companies-use-diversity-data-to-hold-law-firms-accountable/ (“Stacy Hawkins, who teaches diversity courses at Rutgers Law School, said many such in-house programs have existed over the past ten to fifteen years, and yet law firms have only achieved marginal gains in expanding their rosters and leadership positions beyond white men”); see also Jennifer Garcia-Alonso et al., \textit{Getting the Most from Your Diversity Dollars}, BOS. CONSULTING GROUP (June 21, 2017), https://www.bcg.com/publications/2017/people-organization-behavior-culture-getting-the-most-from-diversity-dollars.aspx (concluding in a study by the Boston Consulting Group of over 17,500 employers that “[a]lthough more than 90% of companies have some sort of gender-diversity program in place, only one in four women feel that they have personally benefited from such programs.”).

\textsuperscript{139} 42 U.S.C. § 2000e-8(e) (2018) (“It shall be unlawful for any officer or employee of the Commission to make public in any manner whatever any information obtained by the Commission pursuant to its authority under this section prior to the institution of any proceeding under this subchapter involving such in-formation. Any officer or employee of the Commission who shall make public in any manner whatever any information in violation of this subsection shall be guilty, of a misdemeanor and upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $1,000, or imprisoned not more than one year.”); see Salvador Rodriguez, \textit{These Are the Major Tech Companies That Still Have Yet to Release Diversity Report}, INC. (Mar. 31, 2017) https://www.inc.com/salvador-rodriguez/tesla-snap-diversity-reports.html.

May 2014, Google became the first major tech company to release its diversity data on gender and ethnicity publicly.141 By August 2014, “at least 14 other tech companies” had released this data like Google, including Apple, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Hewlett-Packard, Yahoo, and eBay.142

Two major benefits resulted from companies releasing diversity data. First, companies become more diverse. For example, in 2014, 30% of all Google employees were female and 61% percent were white.143 In 2017, the number of females increased to 31% and the number of white employees decreased to 56%.144 While the numbers have not changed drastically, companies such as Google and Apple are more diverse today than they were.145 One reason for the increase is that companies are forced to follow through on any plans or promises made to the public.146 A second reason is some companies have started linking executive bonuses to diversity hiring goals.147 One example is Intel, which has
surpassed its diversity hiring goals since it began linking executive compensation to meeting diversity goals in 2015.\textsuperscript{148} Finally, large companies, like Facebook and Hewlett-Packard, are using their influence to hold other companies accountable for diversity, like the law firms that they hire.\textsuperscript{149}

Second, releasing diversity data keeps the conversation going and helps educate people.\textsuperscript{150} The more people discuss the employment of individuals with disabilities, the more comfortable people will be with the idea; and the more comfortable people get, the more likely they are to get behind the cause. Thus, by including disability in the EEO-1 Report, there is a strong likelihood the same individuals and groups who once pressured companies to hire more women and ethnic minorities will similarly apply pressure to increase the number of employees with disabilities.\textsuperscript{151}
B. A Five-Year Plan Tracking Disability, By Type, is the Best Way to Fix the Problem

First, the EEOC must define the term “disability” for the purposes of the EEO-1 Report. To be consistent with current federal laws, the definition should be the same as the one used in the ADA, that a person is disabled if he or she (1) has “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;” (2) has “a record of such impairment, or;” (3) is “regarded as having such an impairment.”\textsuperscript{152} Using the ADA definition makes the most sense since employers are already familiar with, and must abide by it.

Second, employers must track disability by type, so the EEOC will be best able to identify general patterns of discrimination, specific disabilities that need attention, and possible remedies. Tracking disability by type is equivalent to the current tracking of specific races.\textsuperscript{153} Under the ADA’s definition of disability, there are no official “types” of disabilities.\textsuperscript{154} The types of disabilities the EEO-1 Report tracks should be adjusted according to the five-year plan set forth below to allow for the greatest chance of success.\textsuperscript{155} There are several reasons why a plan that breaks down the types of disabilities from two to six over a five-year period has a good chance of being successful.\textsuperscript{156} First, it is less overwhelming for

\textsuperscript{152} 42 U.S.C. § 12102 (2019).
\textsuperscript{153} See generally Employer Information Report EEO-1, supra note 51 (listing all the races that the report currently tracks).
\textsuperscript{154} See generally The ADA: Questions and Answers, U.S. EQUAL EMP. OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION, https://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/adaqa1.cfm (last visited Sept. 24, 2019). “The ADA defines an ‘individual with a disability’ as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.” Id.
\textsuperscript{155} See generally Amy Morin, Change Doesn’t Happen Overnight: It Happens In These Five Stages, FORBES (Mar. 17, 2014, 9:01 AM), https://www.forbes.com/sites/amymorin/2014/03/17/change-doesnt-happen-overnight-it-happens-in-these-five-stages/#578ebff94f51. Psychologists Carlo DiClemente and James O. Prochaska identified five stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance. See id. It is not until stage four (action) that behavior begins to change. Id.
\textsuperscript{156} See infra Part IV(B) 1, 2, 3; see also News Release, U.S. Office Pers. Mgmt., Federal Agencies Exceed Disability Hiring Goal (Oct. 27, 2016). In 2010, President Obama called on federal agencies to hire an additional 100,000 employees with disabilities over a five-year period. See id. The order required that certain actions be taken within 60 days and 120 days, each agency must designate a senior-level official to be responsible, and the program was to be reviewed each year. See Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals With Disabilities, 75 Fed. Reg. 45039 (July 6, 2010). By 2015, the federal government had
employers. Second, there is likely to be some resistance at first, so a gradual plan allows people to develop a better understanding of the different types of disabilities and the importance of breaking disability down by type. Finally, a five-year plan allows enough time to move through the five stages of change and achieve a positive result.\textsuperscript{157}

1. \textbf{Year One}

Disability should be broken down into two categories: physical disabilities and non-visible disabilities. Physical disability should include any impairment that affects mobility or movement.\textsuperscript{158} Non-visible should include all other impairments recognized under the ADA. This breakdown is the easiest way for employers to obtain information regarding employees with disabilities since there is a strong likelihood employees will still be hesitant to disclose their disabilities in the first year. Even if employees do not self-identify, employers can still likely determine which employees have a physical disability. Additionally, one study hired well over 100,000 individuals with disabilities. See News Release, U.S. Office Pers. Mgmt., \textit{supra} note 157. The five-year period allowed for the program to be reviewed annually and provide any necessary changes to ensure success as well as give federal agencies the chance to develop well thought out strategies for recruiting and retaining employees instead of being rushed. See Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals With Disabilities, \textit{supra} note 157.

\textsuperscript{157} See Marc Perry, 5 Stages of Change Model: Which Stage Are You In?, \textit{BUILTLEAN} (Nov. 27, 2017), https://www.builtlean.com/2010/06/01/5-stages-of-change-model-which-stage-are-you-in/. In phase one, precontemplation, people defend their current patterns of behavior and might not even recognize that there is a problem that needs to be changed. See \textit{id}. In phase two, contemplation, people consider the possibility of change but are not ready to the first step. See \textit{id}. It is likely that employers will remain in this phase for at least one year because the report is only filed once a year. In phase three, preparation, people do one of two things: they either take the first small step or continue to do nothing. See \textit{id}. After year three, it is hopeful that employers will be more accepting of individuals with disabilities and individuals with disabilities will be more willing to disclose their disability. During phase four, action, people begin making meaningful changes. See \textit{id}. Finally, in phase five, maintenance, people are safely at the point where they can avoid temptation to return to their previous behavior. See \textit{id}. By the end of year five, it is hopeful that the stereotypes about disabled people have changed and more individuals with disabilities will be hired.

found that 86% of people with a visible disability voluntarily disclosed their disability to their employer.\textsuperscript{159}

2. Year Three

The categories should be further broken down to include sensory disabilities, physical disabilities, mental illness, and other health impairments. Sensory disabilities should include any impairment affecting the senses.\textsuperscript{160} Mental illness should include any “health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking, or behavior.”\textsuperscript{161} “Other health impairments” should include all other impairments recognized under the ADA—excluding those recognized in year one. The expansion in categories represents the belief that employees will begin to feel more comfortable disclosing their disabilities to employers because, at this time, companies will have started recognizing the importance of hiring and promoting employees with disabilities. At the three-year mark, it is likely that any company who did not have a disability hiring policy before will have implemented one, and thus, the number of individuals with disabilities hired will begin to increase.\textsuperscript{162}

3. Year Five

In the final year of the plan, “other health impairments” should be broken down even further. The categories should now be sensory disabilities, physical disabilities, mental illness,


\textsuperscript{160} See What is Sensory Impairment?, ECL.ORG (Aug. 25, 2017), https://www.ecl.org/about/latest-news/blog/2017/08/25/what-is-sensory-impairment (“Sensory impairment is the common term used to describe Deafness, blindness, visual impairment, hearing impairment and Deafblindness.”).


\textsuperscript{162} See Megan Rose Dickey, supra note 146. Since first releasing their diversity data in 2014, 2017 is the first year that “Facebook has increased the overall representation of black employees.” Id.
neurological disorders, non-physical developmental disabilities, and other health impairments. Neurological disorders include “any condition that is caused by a dysfunction in part of the brain or nervous system, resulting in physical and/or psychological symptoms.” 163 Non-physical developmental disabilities should include any impairment that affects cognitive abilities as well as all intellectual disabilities comprised of people with “limited mental capacity and difficulty with adaptive behaviors.” 164 The “other health impairments” category remains the same; however, because new categories have been added, there are fewer disabilities in this category. 165 After year five, more millennials will be in the workforce, making it a more tolerant place. 166 At this time, employers should have a better understanding of individuals with disabilities and employees as well as the public will begin to hold companies accountable.

C. Counterarguments

1. Tracking Disability Creates an Additional Burden on Employers

Employers are likely to argue that including disability by type in the EEO-1 Report will place an additional burden on them. During the Obama administration, it was announced that the EEO-1 Report would be expanded to include W-2 pay data and


In August 2017, President Trump, acting through the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB"), issued a memorandum to the EEOC announcing it was "initiating a review and immediate stay" of the proposed changes to the EEO-1 Report. In its memorandum, OMB cited two main reasons for the stay. The OMB expressed concern "that some aspects of the revised collection of information lack practical utility, are unnecessarily burdensome, and do not adequately address privacy and confidentiality issues." Several groups, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, also argued against the proposed changes. However, the "burdens" identified in support of the argument for not including pay data are not justified if disability is added to the EEO-1 Report. The need for tracking disability is much greater than the need for pay data and thus, justifies the increased "burden" placed on employers because of the benefit it will provide. Pay data would indicate inequality in payment of people who are already employed, whereas tracking disability would indicate how many people are employed in the first place. We cannot even track pay inequality among disabled workers since we are still unsure how many disabled workers are employed. Additionally, unlike pay, which is influenced by a variety of factors, how many disabled employees a company has is black and white. Another reason the proposal to include pay data...
data failed was because the EEOC did not follow the proper procedure.\textsuperscript{173} If a proposal to include disability followed the proper steps, there is a greater likelihood that it would be approved.

2. Tracking Disability Will Not Force People to Disclosure Their Disabilities

Under the ADA, an employer cannot ask you if you are disabled or ask about the nature of your disability. An employer can ask if you can perform the duties of the job with or without reasonable accommodation. An employer can also ask you to describe or to demonstrate how, with or without reasonable accommodation, you will perform the duties of the job.\textsuperscript{174}

Even with these rules in place, employers can still obtain adequate and accurate information on disability in the workplace. First, employers can give employees the opportunity to self-disclose in their application or self-identification form.\textsuperscript{175} Second, employers can ask employees to disclose their disabilities anonymously.\textsuperscript{176} Opponents might argue that employees will not disclose their disabilities, thus making the data collected by the EEOC-1 Report inaccurate and a waste of time.\textsuperscript{177} Some reasons
why employees do not disclose their disabilities to employers are “concerns that it would result in lowered expectations, lack of respect, isolation from co-workers, a decrease in job responsibility, being passed over for promotion, or increased likelihood of termination.” While the numbers reported in the initial years will likely be lower than the real numbers, there is a strong likelihood that the number of people who disclose disabilities will increase over time. Additionally, the DOL notes that companies can increase disclosure rates. If employees are not disclosing their disabilities, it might indicate that an employer must make additional changes to make the work environment more tolerable and friendly towards people with disabilities. By making the necessary changes, disclosure rates will therefore increase.

3. Employers Will Be Forced to Hire Unqualified Workers

Individuals without disabilities might argue that the costs of hiring individuals with disabilities are too high and that employers will feel pressure to hire people with disabilities...
regardless of whether they are qualified.\textsuperscript{181} Employers are afraid that people with disabilities will be less productive, cost them money because of increased insurance and workplace accommodations, sue them if they are fired, and have a negative impact on other employees and customers.\textsuperscript{182} While these fears are understandable of an uneducated employer, they are not supported by statistics.\textsuperscript{183}

In one study conducted by ODEP, 59% of employers said accommodations needed by employees with disabilities “cost absolutely nothing.”\textsuperscript{184} Another study found that “workers with disabilities had a turnover rate 48% lower than that of the nondisabled population, with medical costs 67% lower and time-off expenses 73% lower.”\textsuperscript{185} Furthermore, the ADA only applies to “qualified” individuals, meaning “an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires.”\textsuperscript{186} While the end goal of including disability on the EEO-1 Report is to increase the number of individuals with disabilities who are hired and promoted due to an increase in awareness and understanding, employers have no requirement to hire employees simply because they have a disability.

CONCLUSION

If a tree falls in the forest and nobody hears it, does it really make a sound? Today, the United States is stuck in a vicious cycle. People have disabilities but hide them because they are afraid of


\textsuperscript{182} See Lengnick-Hall et al., supra note 22 (explaining the various reasons why employers are hesitant to hire individuals with disabilities and how they are not backed by statistics).

\textsuperscript{183} See id.; see also infra Part II of this note.


\textsuperscript{185} Cann, supra note 98 (study was conducted by the American Society of Safety Engineers).

being discriminated against in the workplace. Because people with disabilities remain hidden, people do not talk about it and people are not educated. Since people remain unaware and uneducated, companies do not hire, recruit, or promote people with disabilities. Because people with disabilities are not in positions to make meaningful changes, things remain the way they are. Thus, the cycle repeats and since nobody heard the tree fall, nobody cares.

The EEOC was created by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Its mission was to stop unlawful employment discrimination based on race, sex, color, religion, and national origin. Today, the EEOC is charged with enforcing federal laws that are designed to protect over double the number of categories. What was once only five groups has turned into twelve: “race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information.” It is time for society to once
again change. The EEO-1 Report should include disability, by type, to ensure that individuals with disabilities are just as protected and progressing the same as other minorities in the workforce.

“This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. The great phrases of that purpose still sound in every American heart, North and South: ‘All men are created equal . . . .’”\textsuperscript{194} It was true in 1965 when Lyndon B. Johnson said it to Congress and it is certainly true today: the law recognizes the importance of protecting individuals with disabilities and now, it is time that employers do too.

\textsuperscript{194} Lyndon B. Johnson, President, Address to Congress at the Signing of the Voting Act (Mar. 15, 1965) (transcript available at LBJ Presidential Library).