



February 25, 2021

I am seeking support from my community and state leaders to help me and about 150 other workers keep our jobs. We are people with disabilities, including veterans, and are often unheard.

The U.S. Army military branch currently has the most Intergovernmental Support Agreements (IGSA) in the country. Two of those work sites include Fort Knox and Fort Campbell. Currently, more than 75% of the custodial work force at these installations are team members with significant disabilities including veterans. We work under the AbilityOne Program and contribute to the local economy, provide no strain on public assistance programs and have health care benefits.

The Army has chosen these two custodial services contracts as a quick solution to reducing costs by putting out bids for new contractors outside the AbilityOne Program who can pay lower wages and aren't required to provide health benefits. However, there are many other AbilityOne contracts at risk. Unfortunately, they are moving forward with a short-term plan that will have negative long-term impacts.

Given the rural locations of most Army posts (i.e. Fort Knox and Fort Campbell), it is highly unlikely that we will find competitive employment. The negative impacts of the Army's decision are:

- We will lose our livelihoods, homes, cars and health care.
- We, Individuals with disabilities including veterans, will have no opportunities for competitive employment in these rural areas.
- We will likely be forced to turn to government assistance for basic needs.
- Our health care needs/costs will likely increase as a result of no health care benefits, depression, anxiety and no access to preventive care.

Our service levels have never been a concern at these sites. GCE has served as a long-term partner with the U.S. Army to provide custodial services since 1998 at Fort Campbell, and since 2011 at Fort Knox. We have consistently received satisfactory/outstanding/ and exceptional Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting (CPAR) scores. We prove our mettle every day.

The Army's decision erodes at the integrity of the AbilityOne Program, leaving the employees on these contracts to suffer the consequences. The odds have already been stacked against us. Nationwide, the AbilityOne Program provides work to more than 40,000 people - like me - with disabilities. More than 700 not-for-profits (NPs) ensure work for people like us (i.e. with a disability).

Global Connections to Employment, Inc.

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I am writing to you to ask that you please give this decision some attention. Help us keep our jobs. Support the disabilities community by not allowing our independence to be stripped away. We have been on the right track in recent years, closing the gap on employing persons with disabilities. We want to work and there is no reason why we can't work. We do not want to turn to government assistance as a way to support our families.

I'm hopeful you hear us – the people you serve – and have faith that you will support us in living the basic, American dream.

My address is:

My telephone number is:

Respectfully yours,

Global Connections to Employment, Inc.

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