

# Congressional Record

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RECOGNIZING THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ENABLE AMERICA -- HON. C. W. BILL YOUNG (Extensions of Remarks - September 12, 2012)

HON. C. W. BILL YOUNG  
OF FLORIDA  
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Wednesday, September 12, 2012

- Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of Enable America, a first of its kind organization entirely dedicated to reducing unemployment among people with disabilities. This organization has assisted countless people with disabilities in finding a job and the belief that "good things happen when people have jobs" underpins their efforts.
- Enable America was founded by Richard Salem, a man intimately familiar with the disabled community. After losing his eyesight as a teenager, Richard's parents were the main drivers behind his continued inclusion in the public high school system, which later allowed him to graduate cum laude from Belmont Abbey College. In pursuing a law degree, he was the first blind student to attend Duke Law School, graduating with distinction in 1972. Now, 40 years later, Richard is not only a successful lawyer, as the founding partner of the Tampa-based Salem Law group, he is also a tireless advocate for those living with disabilities and life-changing diseases.
- Knowing that the support he received was one of the keys to his success, Richard founded Enable America in 2002 as a nonprofit organization that is focused on increasing employment among the 54 million Americans with disabilities, including wounded warriors and disabled veterans. With more than 70 percent of adults with disabilities wanting to work so that they can live independently, the programs that Enable America has developed helps them to achieve this goal. Enable America's committed staff knows that having a job gives people "self-esteem, independence and pride. They have a place in the community and are able to grow and become their own person."
- In assisting people with disabilities to find a job, Enable America directly confronts the misinformation or misunderstandings about the disabled community, which often hinders people with disabilities from finding employment. Enable America's two-pronged approach was developed specifically to help connect the disabled community with the business community. First, they host Community Connection Meetings across the nation, which assist with the creation of a national information-sharing network comprised of local community task forces devoted to eliminating the barriers to employment for disabled individuals. Second, Enable America hosts a series of meetings with business leaders, managers, resource professionals and speakers to encourage prospective employers to hire disabled job seekers by demonstrating the many benefits of hiring disabled employees and by answering questions that businesses may have about issues such as personnel policies, taxes and insurance.
- Beyond connecting people with disabilities with business leaders, Enable America also provides disability employee mentoring. This program provides people with disabilities with real-world experience in the workplace by matching mentees with business mentors that are looking to improve diversity and increase employment opportunities. Today, I have the privilege to host one of these mentees in my Washington, D.C. office. William "Bill" Rockwood, who is currently pursuing a law degree at Georgetown, does not allow his learning disability to stop him from embracing new

experiences and taking advantage of opportunities when they come along. Programs like Enable America, which offered Bill a unique mentoring opportunity, not only provide an irreplaceable experience for the mentees, but also afford mentors an impactful look at the contributions they can make in any work environment.

- Finally, Enable America assists our wounded warriors as they return to active duty or civilian life. These brave men and women who have served our country in combat deserve all the assistance that we can provide. Military service members, past and present, possess a great sense of honor and traits any employer would find valuable--duty, commitment, and loyalty. Enable America honors their service and sacrifice by showing businesses that investing in our nation's veterans and honoring their service to our nation is not charity, but a smart decision.
- Mr. Speaker, as you can see this organization is truly making a difference in the lives of those living with disabilities. I ask my colleagues to join with me today in recognizing this important milestone and to wish Enable America continued success in the future.