

**METROPOLITAN  
TRANSPORTATION  
COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Transcript**



JUNE 16, 2025

1 **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO EMPLOYMENT**

2 **MONDAY, JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2025, 1:30 PM**

3

4

5 **EILEEN NORMAN:** WELCOME EVERYONE. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR JOINING

6 US AND I HOPE EVERYONE HAD A DELICIOUS, AMAZING LUNCH. I AM

7 GOING TO GIVE IT ONE SECOND. IT'S OKAY. OKAY, WELCOME AGAIN.

8 THANKS FOR BEING HERE, MY NAME IS EILEEN NORMAN. I WORK AT THE

9 SAN FRANCISCO IHSS PUBLIC AUTHORITY HIRE IN SAN FRANCISCO AND

10 I AM VERY HONORED TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO HELP FACILITATE THIS

11 PANEL TODAY. SO I AM JOINED HERE BY SEVERAL PEOPLE THAT ARE

12 HELPING TO MAKE THIS POSSIBLE. WE HAVE OUR NOTE TAKERS AND

13 ZOOM ATTENDANTS OVER HERE. DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A SECOND TO

14 INTRODUCE YOURSELF? WONDERFUL.

15

16 **SPEAKER:** HI EVERYONE, I'M MONA, I WILL BE TAKING NOTES

17 SPECIFICALLY FOR THE RESOLUTION.

18

19 **EILEEN NORMAN:** AND MAGGIE IS HERE SOMEWHERE, I THINK. THERE IS

20 MAGGIE. WONDERFUL. SO, EVERYONE COMING TOGETHER TO HELP MAKE

21 THESE SESSIONS HAPPEN. I JUST WANT TO COVER SOME BASIC

22 HOUSEKEEPING BEFORE WE KICK OFF OUR CONVERSATION, SO HOPEFULLY

23 YOU ALL HAVE SEEN WHERE THE ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS ARE OUTSIDE

24 OF THE CONFERENCE ROOM. THERE IS THE ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

25 FOR ANYBODY WHO NEEDS ASL, LIVE CAPTIONING, ASSISTIVE



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1 LISTENING DEVICES THROUGHOUT THE DAY, YOU CAN CHECK IN AT THE  
2 ACCESSIBILITY DESK. THERE IS A QUIET ROOM FOR ANYBODY WHO  
3 NEEDS TO TAKE A BREAK OR HAVE A QUIET SPACE, THAT'S DESIGNATED  
4 ON THE FIFTH FLOOR. THAT ROOM DOESN'T HAVE ANY WINDOWS, SO YOU  
5 CAN USE THEM AS NEEDED. THE EMERGENCY EXITS -- I'M LIKE A  
6 FLIGHT ATTENDANT, OUT TO THE SIDE OVER HERE, AND THEN WE ALSO  
7 HAVE NOTE CARDS. YOU HAVE NOTE CARDS OVER HERE FOR FOLKS? OR  
8 WHO HAS THE NOTE CARDS? OH, THEY'RE BACK THERE. SO WE HAVE  
9 NOTE CARDS FOR THOSE WHO, YOU KNOW, DON'T NECESSARILY WANT TO  
10 SPEAK BUT WOULD LIKE TO WRITE IT DOWN OR IF WE RUN OUT OF  
11 TIME, YOU CAN WRITE IT DOWN. WE ALSO HAVE THE WHITE BOARDS  
12 THAT ARE OUTSIDE. SO LET'S GO TO THE NEXT PAGE HERE. I'M A  
13 LITTLE SCRIPTED HERE TODAY. OUR TOPIC FOR THIS PANEL  
14 PRESENTATION IS ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT: BARRIERS AND  
15 OPPORTUNITIES TO EMPLOYMENT. SO, THIS IS A GREAT CONVERSATION  
16 WHEREAS YOU ALL KNOW, WE'RE HERE TO TALK ABOUT THE ISSUES THAT  
17 AFFECT THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY OF THE BAY AREA AND THIS IS  
18 YOUR TIME TO HAVE YOUR VOICE HELP LEAD THE DISCUSSION. SO, WE  
19 WANT TO BRING ALL DIFFERENT LIFE EXPERIENCES AND TALK ABOUT  
20 OUR DIFFERENT NEEDS AND BE ABLE TO RESPECT DIFFERENT  
21 PERSPECTIVES WHILE WE HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS. SO I WANT TO  
22 GO AHEAD AND START TO INTRODUCE OUR PANEL TODAY THAT IS  
23 HELPING US TO LEAD THIS DISCUSSION. SO, TO MY RIGHT WE HAVE  
24 PETER. PETER, WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU DO? WE'LL JUST DO  
25 INTRODUCTIONS FIRST.



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1

2 **PETER DEHAAS:** I'M PETER DEHAAS, THE FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE  
3 DIRECTOR OF THE SAN FRANCISCO DISABILITY BUSINESS ALLIANCE.

4

5 **EILEEN NORMAN:** EXCELLENT. AND RICARDO?

6

7 **RICARDO PEREZ:** HI EVERYONE, I'M RICARDO PEREZ, SECTOR BUSINESS  
8 CONSULTANT FOR THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION.

9

10 **EILEEN NORMAN:** WONDERFUL. SO WE'RE GOING TO START WITH THE  
11 CONVERSATION WITH PETER AND RICARDO TELLING US, AND I'M GOING  
12 TO REMEMBER TO BE A LITTLE BIT SLOWER BECAUSE I KNOW I CAN  
13 SPEED UP, SO PLEASE LET ME KNOW IF I'M GOING TOO FAST. WE'RE  
14 GOING TO START THE CONVERSATION ON THIS TOPIC WITH THESE TWO  
15 AND THEN WE'RE GOING TO OPEN IT UP SO BE SURE YOU'RE BRINGING  
16 YOUR QUESTIONS, THOUGHTS, OPINIONS TO THE TABLE. GO FOR IT.

17

18 **PETER DEHAAS:** GREETINGS. THANKS EVERYBODY FOR COMING OUT  
19 TODAY. FIRST, I WANTED TO THANK DRENNAN AND VALERIE AND THE  
20 MTC FOR INVITING ME HERE TODAY. AS I SAID, MY NAME IS PETER  
21 DEHAAS AND I'M THE FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE SAN  
22 FRANCISCO DISABILITY BUSINESS ALLIANCE. SFDBA IS A COMMUNITY  
23 OF ARTISTS, CREATIVES, ENTREPRENEURS, AND SMALL BUSINESS  
24 OWNERS WITH ALL TYPES OF DISABILITIES WHO ARE COLLECTIVELY  
25 DEFINING WHAT INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC POWER CAN AND SHOULD LOOK



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1 LIKE. THE SFDBA SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS AT EVERY STAGE OF THEIR  
2 BUSINESS JOURNEY FROM THE SPARK OF INCEPTION, IN GROWING THEIR  
3 SMALL BUSINESSES, AND ONWARD TO SUSTAINING AND GROWING THEIR  
4 SMALL BUSINESSES. WE DO THIS THROUGH OUR FLAGSHIP FUTURE  
5 ENTREPRENEUR PROGRAM, PERSONALIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND  
6 MOST IMPORTANTLY BY BUILDING A STRONG CONNECTED COMMUNITY OF  
7 FOUNDERS WITH ALL TYPES OF DISABILITIES. I'M HONORED TO BE  
8 HERE TODAY WITH SO MANY FELLOW LEADERS, ADVOCATES, AND FUTURE  
9 COLLABORATORS. LET ME START WITH A SIMPLE BUT VITAL TRUTH.  
10 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT MUST BE VIEWED THROUGH THE LENS OF  
11 EQUITY, ACCESS, AND SUSTAINABILITY BECAUSE THE REALITY IS,  
12 WE'RE NOT THERE YET. DESPITE PROGRESS, THE DISABILITY  
13 COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO FACE DISPROPORTIONATELY HIGH BARRIERS  
14 TO EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. THE GAP, IT'S NOT BECAUSE  
15 OF A LACK OF TALENT OR AMBITION, IT'S A LACK OF ACCESS,  
16 OPPORTUNITY, AND SYSTEMS DESIGNED WITH US AND BY US IN MIND.  
17 PEOPLE OFTEN ASK ME, PETER HOW DID YOU GET INTO THIS WORK?  
18 WELL, MY PATH COMES FROM TWO PLACES, MY FAMILY ROOTS AND MY  
19 LIVED EXPERIENCE. I COME FROM A FAMILY OF ENTREPRENEURS,  
20 EDUCATORS, ADVOCATE, AND BUILDERS, PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN  
21 COMMUNITY, HARD WORK, AND MAKING THINGS BETTER THAN THEY FOUND  
22 THEM, THAT SPIRIT OF CREATING AND ADVOCATING IS IN MY D.N.A..  
23 I HAVE BEEN CONNECTED TO THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY MY WHOLE  
24 LIFE, THROUGH MY SISTER'S ADVOCACY WORK, AND FRIENDSHIPS LIKE  
25 MY CLASSMATE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL WHO IS DEAF. I WAS BORN WITH A



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1 SEIZURE DISORDER AND IT'S ONLY BEEN RECENTLY THAT I BEGUN TO  
2 UNPACK HOW THAT EXPERIENCE SHAPED MY LIFE AS A CREATIVE  
3 PROBLEM SOLVER AND ADVOCATE. WHEN I MOVED TO SAN FRANCISCO, I  
4 RECOGNIZED THE CITY'S RICH LEGACY AS THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE  
5 INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT AND THE SECTION 504 PROTESTS,  
6 WHICH LAID THE FOUNDATION FOR WHAT BECAME THE A.D.A. INSPIRED  
7 BY THIS HISTORY AND THE ONGOING NEED FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT,  
8 I LAUNCHED SFDBA WITH A GROUP OF ENTREPRENEURS IN MARCH OF  
9 2020 TO BUILD PATHWAYS FOR ENTREPRENEURS WITH ALL TYPES OF  
10 DISABILITIES TO THRIVE BECAUSE TOO OFTEN THE SYSTEM STILL  
11 FALLS SHORT. WHAT I FOUND WAS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY,  
12 DESPITE THE CITY'S PROGRESSIVE REPUTATION, MANY PEOPLE WITH  
13 DISABILITIES FACE SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS TO TRADITIONAL  
14 EMPLOYMENT, WHETHER IT'S BEING UNDEREMPLOYED OR UNEMPLOYED.  
15 ALMOST EVERYONE I MET HAD A SIDE HUSTLE AND THE DATA CONFIRMED  
16 IT AS I DID MY RESEARCH, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY ARE STARTING  
17 SMALL BUSINESSES AT ALMOST TWICE THE RATE OF THOSE WHO DON'T  
18 READILY SELF IDENTIFY. ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS NOT JUST A CHOICE  
19 FOR MANY IN OUR COMMUNITY, IT'S A VITAL PATH TO ECONOMIC  
20 EMPOWERMENT AND IT'S A PATHWAY TO WHAT I CALL SELF EMPLOYMENT.  
21 THAT'S WHY I STARTED SFDBA, BECAUSE NO ONE SHOULD FEEL LIKE  
22 THEY SHOULD HAVE TO DO THIS ALONE, BECAUSE WE NEED NOT JUST AN  
23 OPPORTUNITY, WE NEED COMMUNITY, MENTORSHIP, VISIBILITY, AND A  
24 SEAT AT THE TABLE. I WAS ASKED TO PUT TOGETHER SOME OF THE  
25 BARRIERS THAT WE AS A COMMUNITY STILL FACE. OBVIOUSLY



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1 DISCRIMINATION IN THE HIRING AND PROMOTION PROCESS IS OFTEN  
2 ROOTED IN OUTDATED BELIEFS AN UNCONSCIOUS BIAS, INACCESSIBLE  
3 SYSTEMS, BOTH PHYSICAL SPACES AND DIGITAL PLATFORMS CONTINUE  
4 TO EXECUTE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, THE FEAR OF LOSING  
5 BENEFITS IS REAL, SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICAID STILL HOLDS MANY  
6 BACK IN THOSE LIMITATIONS, AND OUR SYSTEM CONSISTENTLY  
7 PUNISHES INDIVIDUALS, IF THEY ARE SUCCESSFUL, BY RISKING THE  
8 LOSS OF HEALTH CARE WHEN WORKING MORE AND THAT'S A MORAL  
9 FAILURE. THERE IS A SEVERE LACK OF MENTORSHIP, ACCESS, AND  
10 REPRESENTATION IN ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEMS AND IT'S HARD TO  
11 BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE. NONE OF THESE CHALLENGES EXIST BECAUSE  
12 OF A LOCK OF AMBITION. THEY EXIST BECAUSE WE'RE NAVIGATING  
13 STRUCTURES, NOT DESIGNED WITH US IN MIND. THERE IS A SHIFT  
14 HAPPENING. THERE IS STILL AN EXCITING PART. WE'RE LIVING  
15 THROUGH A SHIFT, ALTHOUGH WE'RE LIVING THROUGH SOME DARK TIMES  
16 RIGHT NOW. THE RISE OF REMOTE WORK IN THE GIG ECONOMY OFFERS  
17 FLEXIBILITY THAT DIDN'T EXIST BEFORE. IT'S A GATEWAY TO FULL  
18 PARTICIPATION. ENTREPRENEURSHIP OFFER AS POWERFUL PATH TO  
19 SELF-DETERMINATION, ALLOWING US TO DESIGN OUR WORK SPACES, SET  
20 OUR OWN HOURS, AND BUILD OUR ACCOMMODATIONS BY DEFAULT, NOT  
21 EXCEPTION. WE'RE ALSO SEEING THE GROWTH OF COMMUNITY OWNED  
22 BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES WHERE ENTREPRENEURS WITH  
23 DISABILITIES PULL RESOURCES, SHARE RISKS, AND SUPPORT EACH  
24 OTHER IN TRADITIONAL SYSTEM -- WHERE TRADITIONAL SYSTEMS  
25 HAVEN'T. AND JUST TO TOUCH ON A FEW THINGS I THINK ARE WORKING



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1 IN SAN FRANCISCO, SFDBA IS BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE SBA,  
2 THE SBDC, DEPARTMENT OF REHAB, WE OFFER PEER SUPPORT, SYSTEMS  
3 NAVIGATION, AND CREATING PATHWAYS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
4 CONTRACTS AND DIVERSE SUPPLIER PROGRAMS, AS WELL AS ADVOCACY.  
5 MORE AND MORE IMPACT INVESTORS RECOGNIZE THE DISABILITY IS NOT  
6 A LIABILITY, IT'S A WEALTH SPRING OF INNOVATION. SO BUILDING  
7 ON THAT CREATIVE SPARK. SFDBA IS PROUD OF SOME -- JUST TO NAME  
8 A FEW OF OUR ENTREPRENEURS, FOUNDERS OF YO SOY CEVICHE,  
9 SERVING AUTHENTIC FLAVORS AND BEAUTIFUL LOSERS BARBERSHOP HERE  
10 AT THE HEART OF THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT, OWNED AND OPERATED BY  
11 CESAR RAMOS, BOTH OWNED AND OPERATED BY DISABLED ENTREPRENEURS  
12 REDEFINING SERVICE IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY. THEY'RE CUTTING  
13 THROUGH STEREOTYPE AND PAVING THE WAY FOR OTHERS. THESE ARE  
14 JUST A FEW PROVING DISABILITY IS A SOURCE OF CREATIVITY, GRIT,  
15 AND INNOVATION, NOT A BARRIER. OBVIOUSLY WE STILL HAVE PLENTY  
16 OF WORK TO DO AS WELL. I WOULD SAY BENEFIT REFORM IS  
17 ESSENTIAL, NO ONE SHOULD HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A PAYCHECK AND  
18 HEALTH CARE. ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR MANY INDIVIDUALS WITH  
19 DISABILITIES IS STILL A BARRIER. SO MAKING SURE THAT FOLKS  
20 HAVE ACCESS TO CREATING -- ESTABLISHING CREDIT RATHER AND  
21 ACCESS TO FINANCIAL LITERACY AND FLEXIBLE FUNDING STREAMS,  
22 MICRO LOANS AND CAPITAL MUST BE REACHABLE FOR ENTREPRENEURS  
23 WITH DISABILITIES. THEY MUST INCLUDE DISABILITY NOT AS A  
24 GESTURE BUT A REQUIREMENT. SO, NONE OF THIS MOMENTUM HAPPENS  
25 IN ISOLATION, IT REQUIRES COLLABORATION ACROSS SECTORS,



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1 INDUSTRIES, AND COMMUNITIES, INVESTORS, TECH INNOVATORS,  
2 EMPLOYERS, ADVOCATES, ALL OF THEIR PARTNERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL.  
3 INCLUSION ISN'T JUST AN ADD-ON, IT ISN'T AN ADD-ON, IT'S THE  
4 FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH. TOGETHER WE  
5 CAN CO-CREATE SYSTEMS THAT WORK FOR EVERYONE, UNLOCKING THE  
6 FULL POTENTIAL OF DISABLED ENTREPRENEURS AND WORKERS. IMAGINE  
7 A FUTURE WHERE INCLUSION IS SECOND NATURE, WHERE BUSINESSES  
8 AND INSTITUTIONS DON'T HAVE TO ASK HOW DO WE ACCOMMODATE?  
9 BECAUSE ACCESSIBILITY IS BUILT INTO THEIR CULTURE, THEIR  
10 PROCESSES, AND THEIR DESIGN. ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY, FLEXIBLE  
11 WORK MODELS, AND INCLUSIVE PROCUREMENT ARE NOT EXCEPTIONS,  
12 THEY'RE THE DEFAULT. THIS IS A WORLD WHERE PEOPLE WITH  
13 DISABILITIES DON'T HAVE TO ASK FOR ACCESS, THEY JUST HAVE IT.  
14 ALSO, CONTINUING TO DEMYSTIFY DISABILITY. I FIND THAT  
15 SOMETIMES SAYING THE D-WORD IN THE BAY AREA CAN CAUSE A  
16 CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FEAR FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND OUR  
17 LIVED EXPERIENCES. LET'S BE CLEAR, ACCESSIBILITY DOESN'T HAVE  
18 TO BE EXPENSIVE, IT'S ABOUT THOUGHTFUL PLANNING, BUDGETING,  
19 AND CREATIVITY. IT'S ABOUT SHIFTING PERSPECTIVE FROM COST TO  
20 INVESTMENT AND IT'S ABOUT RESPECT, NOT PITY. DISABLED  
21 ENTREPRENEURS AND PROFESSIONALS WANT OPPORTUNITIES, NOT  
22 CHARITY. THEY BRING PERFORMANCES AND SKILLS THAT MAKE  
23 BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES STRONGER. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
24 ARE A VITAL PART OF THE SAN FRANCISCO AND BAY AREA ECONOMIC  
25 RECOVERY AS THE THIRD LARGEST MINORITY MARKET, INDIVIDUALS



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1 WITH DISABILITIES REPRESENT AN ESTIMATED \$490 BILLION IN  
2 DISPOSABLE INCOME NATURALLY. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES WANT TO  
3 SPEND MONEY, JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE. THE ECONOMIC POWER IS  
4 FUELED BY THE RESILIENCE, CREATIVITY, AND INNOVATION PEOPLE  
5 WITH DISABILITIES BRING TO THE WORK FORCE AND  
6 ENTREPRENEURIAL VENTURES. WE MUST BROADEN OUR PERCEPTION OF  
7 DISABILITY. IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT VISIBLE DIFFERENCES, INVISIBLE  
8 DISABILITIES OFTEN UNRECOGNIZED ARE A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THIS  
9 COMMUNITY AND ALSO DISABILITY INTERSECTS WITH ALL IDENTITIES,  
10 RACE, ETHNICITY, GENDER, AND MORE, MAKING INCLUSIVITY A  
11 COMPLEX AND URGENT PRIORITY. CHANGING HOW WE PERCEIVE  
12 DISABILITY MEANS NOT SEEING IT AS A LIMITATION BUT AS A SOURCE  
13 OF UNIQUE INSIGHT AND POWER. IMAGINE A FUTURE WHERE ECONOMIC  
14 OPPORTUNITY IS NOT LIMITED BY DISABILITY, WHERE EVERY PERSON,  
15 REGARDLESS OF THEIR ABILITIES HAS THE FREEDOM, RESOURCES, AND  
16 COMMUNITY TO BUILD THEIR OWN PATH. THIS ISN'T JUST A DREAM,  
17 IT'S A FUTURE WITHIN OUR REACH. EACH OF US HERE TODAY HAS THE  
18 POWER TO BE A PART OF THIS HISTORIC TRANSFORMATION. TO NOT  
19 ONLY OPEN DOORS, BUT TO BUILD NEW ONES, TO CHALLENGE OLD  
20 SYSTEMS AND CREATE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPES THAT CELEBRATE  
21 DIVERSITY, RESILIENCE, AND INNOVATION. TOGETHER, WE CAN  
22 REWRITE THE STORY OF WHAT IT MEANS TO WORK, TO CREATE, AND TO  
23 THRIVE. LET'S MAKE THAT FUTURE REAL, NOT SOME DAY, BUT  
24 STARTING NOW. THANK YOU. [APPLAUSE].

25



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1 **EILEEN NORMAN:** THANK YOU SO MUCH PETER. RICARDO, TELL US MORE.

2

3 **RICARDO PEREZ:** YOU GOT IT. HI AGAIN EVERYONE, SO AGAIN, I'M  
4 RICARDO PEREZ, SECTOR BUSINESS CONSULTANT. THIS TITLE AND WHAT  
5 I DO FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION IS SOMEWHAT RECENT.  
6 I WORK FOR A CENTRAL OFFICE UNDER A PROGRAM KNOWN AS THE  
7 PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS. IT IS A GRANT FUNDED PROGRAM THAT IS  
8 BEING OVERSEEN BY SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY AND WE ARE  
9 ESSENTIALLY TRYING TO FIND WAYS, OTHER METHODS TO ASSIST ALL  
10 OF OUR JOB SEEKERS IN THEIR PATH TO THESE HIGH LEVEL, HIGHWAY  
11 TYPE OF ROLES. WE'RE FOCUSING ON SIX SPECIFIC SECTORS AT THE  
12 MOMENT, BUT WE WANT TO EXPAND. THOSE SECTORS ARE ADVANCE  
13 MANUFACTURING, BIOTECHNOLOGY, SUSTAINABLE GREEN ENERGY,  
14 CONSTRUCTION/TRANSPORTATION, HEALTH CARE, AND INFORMATION  
15 TECHNOLOGY, ALL OF WHOM ARE A BIG UMBRELLA OF THOSE PARTICULAR  
16 SECTORS AND I MYSELF FOCUS IN THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND  
17 THE SUSTAINABLE GREEN ENERGY SECTORS. TO GIVE YOU SOME  
18 PERSPECTIVE OF WHAT I AM GOING TO TALK ABOUT WITH REGARDS TO  
19 WHAT WE'VE SEEN IN THOSE SECTORS, I'VE BEEN WITH D.O.R. FOR A  
20 LITTLE OVER 12 YEARS NOW. I STARTED AS A BUSINESS SPECIALIST.  
21 I STARTED HERE IN OUR OLD BUILDING, 301 HOWARD AND THEN I  
22 MOVED TO OUR SAN BRUNO OFFICE, AND THEN I CAME BACK TO SAN  
23 FRANCISCO, WHICH IS NOW AT 455 GOLDEN GATE AS A -- PROMOTED  
24 INTO A REGIONAL BUSINESS SPECIALIST. SO I OVERSAW OUR JOB  
25 DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS WITHIN THREE COUNTIES, MARIN, SAN



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1 FRANCISCO, AND SAN MATEO. OVER THAT TIME, BEING BOTH A  
2 BUSINESS FACING INDIVIDUAL, AS WELL AS HOSTING ALL OF OUR JOB  
3 SEEKERS THAT WERE LOOKING FOR WORK, I SAW A MYRIAD OF THINGS.  
4 I SAW INDIVIDUALS THAT WANTED TO WORK IN RETAIL, INDIVIDUALS  
5 THAT WANTED TO GO TO THE TECH INDUSTRY OR BECOME A SOFTWARE  
6 ENGINEER, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN, MAYBE THEY WANTED TO  
7 START THEIR OWN BUSINESSES. OVERTIME, I SAW SIMILARITIES AS  
8 FAR AS THEIR STRUGGLES AND CONSTANT BARRIERS, ONE OF WHICH IS  
9 THE HIRING PRACTICES BEFORE THE PANDEMIC AND THEN HIRING  
10 PRACTICES AFTER THE PANDEMIC. PRIOR TO THE PANDEMIC, IT WAS  
11 PRETTY STANDARD. IF YOU WANTED TO WORK AT A PARTICULAR JOB,  
12 YOU WOULD HAVE TO CHECK SOME BOXES IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED  
13 FOR THE ROLE. THOSE METRICS THAT WE ALWAYS TELL YOU ABOUT,  
14 WHETHER OR NOT YOU WORK FOR A VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION  
15 PROGRAM OR YOU ARE A VETERAN OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. THOSE ARE  
16 METRICS THEY WANTED TO USE TO GET TAX CREDITS, WORK  
17 OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDITS. AFTER THE PANDEMIC, IT BECAME MORE  
18 NOTICEABLE THAT THERE WAS A LOT MORE INVISIBLE DISABILITIES  
19 THAT INDIVIDUALS DIDN'T QUITE RECOGNIZE IMMEDIATELY, SO IT WAS  
20 NO LONGER ABOUT CHECKING THOSE METRICS, IT WAS ABOUT WHO CAN  
21 DO THIS WORK REMOTELY. WE SAW AN UPTICK IN REFERRALS AT D.O.R.  
22 AROUND THIS TIME AND IT WAS BY INDIVIDUALS WHO PRIOR TO THE  
23 PANDEMIC, WOULD JUST BE CONSIDERED YOUR TYPICAL WORKER. WITH  
24 THE SUPPORT THAT WE'RE TRYING TO PROVIDE TO ALL OF OUR  
25 INDIVIDUALS, IT'S A MATTER OF WHAT WORKS FOR EACH ONE. WHAT WE



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1 SAY AT D.O.R., IT'S AN INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT. SO,  
2 WHATEVER WORKS FOR ONE PERSON IS OBVIOUSLY NOT GOING TO WORK  
3 FOR THE NEXT PERSON, REGARDLESS IF THEY HAVE THE SAME CAREER  
4 GOALS. SO, FAST FORWARD TO NOW THIS STATEWIDE PROGRAM THAT I  
5 AM A PART OF FOR D.O.R., THE WAY THAT WE ARE APPROACHING  
6 THINGS IS BASED ON WHAT WE SEE IN THE WORKFORCE, THE LABOR  
7 MARKET, AND WHAT IS REALLY OBTAINABLE BY INDIVIDUALS. SINCE WE  
8 ARE A GRANT-BASED PROJECT, I AM NOT GOING TO SAY WE HAVE  
9 UNLIMITED FUNDS, BUT WE HAVE A LOT. WE SPEND AS MUCH AS WE  
10 COULD FOR INDIVIDUALS TO SEE WHAT IT WOULD TAKE FOR AN  
11 INDIVIDUAL TO EARN AT LEAST SIX FIGURES. WE FOUND OUT THAT NOT  
12 ONLY DOES IT TAKE A LOT OF MONEY, IT TAKES A LOT OF TIME. NOT  
13 EVERYONE CAN JUST GO THROUGH A FOUR YEAR SCHOOL, NOT EVERYONE  
14 CAN DO A NINE-MONTH CERTIFICATION COURSE. PUBLIC, PRIVATE, IT  
15 DOESN'T MATTER, EVERYONE WAS UNIQUE IN THEIR APPROACH. SO,  
16 BECAUSE OF THAT, WE'RE NOW LOOKING AT HOW WE CAN WORK WITH  
17 BUSINESSES TO PROVIDE DIFFERENT WAYS IN WHICH THEY HIRE  
18 INDIVIDUALS. FOR EXAMPLE, WE'RE WORKING WITH THE EAST BAY  
19 MUNICIPAL UTILITIES DISTRICT AND A KIND OF PSEUDO-  
20 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM. THE REASON WE'RE STARTING THIS IS  
21 BECAUSE WE'RE TRYING TO APPROACH IT WITH THE IDEA THAT WE  
22 SHOULD GO BASED ON MERITS OPPOSED TO APPEARANCE. SO, WHAT  
23 WE'RE GOING TO DO IS HAVE A SMALL COHORT IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS  
24 WILL ONLY BE BROUGHT INTO THE PROGRAM BASED ON THEIR RESUME.  
25 THEY WILL FOREGO AN INTERVIEW PROCESS AND WE'LL ALLOW THEM TO



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1 WORK FOR A TIME PERIOD. IF IT WORKS OUT FOR THEM, THEN THEY  
2 PLAN ON RETAINING THOSE INDIVIDUALS AS FULL TIME EMPLOYEES.  
3 IT'S VERY SIMILAR TO WHEN I HAD ASSISTED THE CITY AND COUNTY  
4 OF SAN FRANCISCO WITH THEIR ACCESS TO CITY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM.  
5 I ASSISTED THE THEN DIVERSITY RECRUITER PORSCHA IN CREATING A  
6 CERTIFICATION PROGRAM THAT ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS TO APPLY FOR  
7 CITY AND COUNTY POSITIONS AND ALLOWED THEM TO ESSENTIALLY  
8 BYPASS AN EXAMINATION BUT SHOWCASING THAT CERTIFICATION  
9 STATING THAT BASED ON MERITS ALONE, THEY SHOULD BE ABLE TO  
10 APPLY FOR THIS POSITION AND AS LONG AS THEY PASS THEIR  
11 PROBATIONARY PERIOD, WHICH I BELIEVE IS STILL ONE YEAR, THEY  
12 WOULD THEN IN TURN BECOME PERMANENT EMPLOYEES. THIS METHOD IN  
13 TERMS OF HIRING PRACTICES IS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN IDENTIFYING AS  
14 PROBABLY THE BEST WAY TO GO ABOUT PROVIDING INFORMATION TO  
15 BUSINESSES WHO ARE HIRING CURRENTLY, PROVIDING INFORMATION TO  
16 JOB SEEKERS, AS FAR AS WHAT RESUMES SHOULD LOOK LIKE, WHAT  
17 THEIR INTERVIEW PRACTICES SHOULD BE IF WE COME TO THAT LEVEL.  
18 YOU KNOW, WE'RE CREATING WHAT WE CALL ADULT WORK EXPERIENCES,  
19 WHERE BUSINESSES AT NO COST CAN HOST SOMEBODY FOR A PARTICULAR  
20 ROLE OR JOB. SO IF FOR INSTANCE, WE HAVE A PARTNERSHIP RIGHT  
21 NOW WITH UCSF, I WANT TO BE A SOFTWARE ENGINEER, I HAVE A  
22 DEGREE, I HAVE NO WORK EXPERIENCE. OKAY, LET'S GIVE YOU SOME  
23 HOURS OVER HERE AND IF IT WORKS OUT, YOU'RE THERE. IF IT  
24 DOESN'T WORK OUT, WE HAVE TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE FOR YOU.  
25 WE'RE TRYING AS MUCH AS WE CAN IN OUR SHORT TIME. OUR GRANT



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1 UNFORTUNATELY IS A FIVE YEAR GRANT. SINCE WE STARTED IN 2021,  
2 WE'RE GOING TO BE COMING TO THE END HERE. A LOT OF OUR  
3 PRACTICES WILL BE SPREAD OUT AMONGST OUR BRANCH OFFICES  
4 STATEWIDE BECAUSE WHAT WE'RE FINDING THAT WORKS, THAT  
5 ESPECIALLY IN WORKING WITH BUSINESSES, IS GOING TO BE KEY AS  
6 FAR AS PROVIDING SERVICES FOR ALL OF OUR JOB SEEKERS,  
7 REGARDLESS OF THEIR LEVEL. AS LONG AS BUSINESSES ARE WILLING  
8 TO WORK WITH US AT THAT LEVEL, WE THINK THAT WE'LL BE ABLE TO  
9 ASSIST A LOT OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHOM WE HAVE BEEN TALKING  
10 ABOUT ALL TODAY, TO FIND SUSTAINABILITY IN THEIR OWN LIVES.  
11 SO, I HOPE THAT WE CAN HAVE A FRUITFUL CONVERSATION. OBVIOUSLY  
12 THE WORK ISN'T DONE QUITE YET AND WHEN IT DOES, I WILL BE OUT  
13 OF A JOB AND I WILL BE QUITE HONEST, THAT'S OKAY. [APPLAUSE].  
14  
15 **EILEEN NORMAN:** WONDERFUL, THANK YOU BOTH. JUST TO STATE, I  
16 SHOULD HAVE SAID THIS AT THE BEGINNING SO THIS IS BEING  
17 RECORDED AND OF COURSE PEOPLE WHO ARE ON ZOOM CAN ALSO PUT IN  
18 THEIR QUESTIONS AND WE WILL GET TO THOSE AS WELL. WE'RE  
19 WORKING TO HAVE LIKE A CONFERENCE RESOLUTION AT THE END OF  
20 THIS CONFERENCE TO COME TOGETHER WITH WHAT WE INTEND OR HOPE  
21 FOR, WHAT OUR INTENTIONS ARE GOING FORWARD WITH THIS. SO THIS  
22 IS WHERE THAT CONFERENCE RESOLUTION HELPS TO GET DRAFTED. THIS  
23 IS WHERE WE WANT TO OPEN UP THE CONVERSATION AND TALK MORE  
24 ABOUT THIS TOPIC AND HOW IT RELATES TO YOU AND WHAT  
25 EXPERIENCES YOU ALL HAVE HAD. SO, WITH THAT, IS THERE ANYBODY



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1 THAT WOULD LIKE -- OH, I SEE ONE HERE AND THEN TWO, THREE. WE  
2 HAVE MICROPHONES ROAMING AROUND.

3

4 **SPEAKER:** HI THERE AGAIN TO EVERYBODY. A COUPLE OF US HAVE HAD  
5 A FRIEND THAT WORKED AT THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB UNDER GOVERNOR  
6 BROWN. GOVERNOR BROWN 1 AND THEN GOVERNOR BROWN 2. HOLLAND WAS  
7 HER NAME, MANY OF YOU MAY REMEMBER HER. SHE IS NO LONGER WITH  
8 US. SHE IS ONE OF THE MANY ADVOCATES AND PEOPLE WITH  
9 DISABILITIES THAT HAVE FOUGHT FOR OUR RIGHTS FOR YEARS. SHE  
10 PASSED ABOUT A YEAR OR TWO AGO. I'M SORRY TO SAY BECAUSE SHE  
11 WAS VERY EFFECTIVE. ANYWAY, WHEN SHE WAS WITH THE DEPARTMENT  
12 OF REHAB, SHE CREATED THE COMMUNITY ACCESS NETWORK. I DON'T  
13 KNOW WHETHER YOU ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THAT. IT WAS THE, AT  
14 THE TIME, IN THE 1970s, 1976 OR 1977 WHEN ADVOCATES IN OUR  
15 COMMUNITY WERE ASKING THE STATE ARCHITECT'S OFFICE TO CREATE  
16 STANDARDS FOR ACCESS IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT. WHAT SHE DID  
17 WAS AMAZING AND I DON'T THINK EITHER JERRY 1 OR JERRY 2  
18 ACTUALLY KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING. SHE CREATED COMMUNITY ACCESS  
19 NETWORK THAT WAS ADVOCATES FROM ACROSS THE STATE, THAT THE  
20 DEPARTMENT OF REHAB PAID -- NOT PAID IN A SALARY BUT PAID THE  
21 EXPENSES TO BRING PEOPLE UP TO SACRAMENTO, BE TRAINED ABOUT  
22 THE NEW ACCESS CODES, BE GIVEN BUSINESS CARDS, THE COSTS FOR  
23 PRINTING DOCUMENTS TO EDUCATE BUSINESSES AND PUBLIC ENTITIES  
24 WERE COVERED BY DEPARTMENT OF REHAB, SO THOSE ADVOCATES COULD  
25 HAVE DOCUMENTS AND INFORMATION THAT WOULD EDUCATE BUSINESSES



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1 AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS ABOUT MAKING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT  
2 ACCESSIBLE SO THAT PEOPLE COULD FINALLY START GETTING JOBS  
3 BECAUSE IN 1990, WHEN CONGRESS PASSED THE A.D.A. AND PRESIDENT  
4 BUSH NUMBER 1 ALSO SIGNED IT INTO LAW, IT WASN'T BECAUSE  
5 CONGRESS LOVED US OR FELT SORRY FOR US OR PRESIDENT BUSH 1 HAD  
6 THOSE FEELINGS, IT WAS BECAUSE WE WERE LIVING ON MEDICAID, WE  
7 WERE LIVING ON SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY, IN OTHER WORDS, WE  
8 WERE TAKING MONEY FROM THE FEDS AND THE STATE AND WEREN'T  
9 PRODUCING ANYTHING. MY GOODNESS IF WE COULD GET THE BUILT  
10 ENVIRONMENT ACCESSIBLE AND TELL BUSINESSES THEY HAD TO HIRE  
11 US, WE COULD BE PRODUCING TAX THAT WOULD SUPPORT COMMUNITIES  
12 INSTEAD OF US BEING A DRAW ON COMMUNITIES, THAT WAS THEIR  
13 PERSPECTIVE. IN 1990, 80% OF OUR POPULATION WAS UNEMPLOYED.  
14 YOU KNOW WHAT THE 2010 CENSUS SAID? 80% OF OUR POPULATION IS  
15 UNEMPLOYED. WE DID NOT HAVE D.R. OR ANYBODY A STRUCTURAL  
16 SOLUTION THAT HAS SOLVED THAT PROBLEM. I'M NOT PUTTING THIS ON  
17 YOU. I DON'T EVEN PUT IT ON THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB AS IT  
18 BEING THAT DEPARTMENT'S FAULT. I AM NOT SURE HOW TO GO ABOUT  
19 MAKING THE CHANGES NECESSARY THAT WILL ALLOW US TO BECOME PART  
20 OF OUR COMMUNITY, BY BEING ABLE TO DO THE THINGS THAT PEOPLE  
21 THAT DON'T HAVE DISABILITIES ARE ABLE TO DO, MAINLY GET A JOB,  
22 BUY A HOME, BE EQUAL PARTNERS IN OUR COMMUNITY, PAY TAXES  
23 EVEN. PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THAT LIKE WOMEN WHO DO A JOB, A  
24 CORPORATE JOB, DON'T GET EQUAL PAY FOR WHAT A MALE GETS DOING  
25 THE SAME JOB. STILL, THE PROBLEM WE HAVE WITH POSSIBLE



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1 EMPLOYERS, THEY LOOK AT US AND SAY THAT'S GOING TO COST US  
2 MONEY. IT'S GOING TO DISRUPT OUR OPERATION. WE CAN'T DO THAT.  
3 80% OF OUR POPULATION IS STILL UNEMPLOYED AND I REALIZE THERE  
4 WILL BE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY, OUR COMMUNITY THAT HAVE SUCH  
5 A HIGH LEVEL OF DISABILITY THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO PHYSICALLY  
6 BECOME EMPLOYED IN A FULL TIME POSITION AND I DON'T MEAN THAT  
7 IN A NEGATIVE WAY, I AM JUST SAYING THIS IS A PERSONAL ISSUE,  
8 AN INDIVIDUAL ISSUE. WE ARE NOT GETTING THE HELP WE NEED. I AM  
9 LOOKING AT A GOVERNOR NOW IN CALIFORNIA THAT WANTS TO CUT  
10 MEDICAID OR MEDI-CAL, A STRUCTURAL FUNDING SOURCE FOR PEOPLE  
11 IN OUR COMMUNITY TO STAY ALIVE. WHAT ARE WE DOING AS A STATE  
12 AND A COUNTRY, BESIDES OF A PRESIDENT THAT MAKES FUN OF A  
13 REPORTER WITH CEREBRAL PALSY, WHAT AS A COUNTRY ARE WE DOING?  
14 WHY AREN'T WE DOING WHAT 200,000 PEOPLE DID ON SATURDAY IN NEW  
15 YORK CITY, OPPOSING MR. TRUMP AND HIS NAZI FRIENDS. WHY ARE WE  
16 NOT AS A COMMUNITY STANDING OR SITTING TOGETHER AND SAYING WE  
17 WON'T ACCEPT THIS ANY LONGER? THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB, WE NEED  
18 YOU TO SIT DOWN WITH US. GOVERNOR NEWSOM, WE NEED YOU TO SIT  
19 DOWN WITH US. IDA CLAIR, STATE ARCHITECT, WE NEED YOU TO SIT  
20 DOWN WITH US. WE HAVE NINE BAY AREA BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THAT  
21 MTC WORKS WITH AND OVER 100 CITIES IN THE BAY AREA, THIS IS  
22 THE FIRST TIME THAT WE HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER, THAT THEY  
23 ARE GOING TO HEAR FROM US AS A GROUP, NOT JUST PEOPLE THAT ARE  
24 USING WHEELCHAIRS OR PEOPLE THAT ARE BLIND OR PEOPLE THAT ARE  
25 DEAF OR PEOPLE THAT HAVE COGNITIVE DISABILITIES. THEY ARE



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1 GOING TO HEAR THERE ALL OF US. WE NEED TO DO EXACTLY THE SAME  
2 THINGS THAT THE PEOPLE IN NEW YORK DID ON SATURDAY AS A WHOLE  
3 COMMUNITY. WE CAN NO LONGER ACCEPT BEING TOLD, SORRY YOU COST  
4 TOO MUCH OR YOU LOOK FUNNY OR YOUR TALK FUNNY. WE ARE EQUAL  
5 PARTNERS IN THIS WORLD. WE WILL NOT ALLOW THIS TO CONTINUE.  
6 THANK YOU.

7

8 **EILEEN NORMAN:** THANK YOU. [APPLAUSE].

9

10 **SPEAKER:** I'M TIRED OF IT. WE NEED TO MAKE THAT CHANGE NOW.  
11 THANK YOU ALL.

12

13 **SPEAKER:** I AM SPEAKING TO RICARDO. IN THE 1990s AFTER THE  
14 A.D.A., I WENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB AND MY SITUATION WAS  
15 EXCELLENT. I KNOW I WAS IN THE LEAP PROGRAM, DO YOU KNOW ABOUT  
16 THAT PROGRAM?

17

18 **RICARDO PEREZ:** ABSOLUTELY.

19

20 **SPEAKER:** I WORK FOR THE STATE BOARD EQUALIZATION. I STARTED IN  
21 THE FILE ROOM AND I WORKED MY WAY UP TO AUDIT IN THREE YEARS,  
22 THE FIRST BLACK AUDITOR FOR THE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION. I WAS  
23 VERY PROUD OF THAT. THEY HELPED ME GO TO UC BERKELEY. I  
24 ALREADY HAD MY UNDERGRADUATE BUT I NEEDED SOME COURSES TO GET  
25 MY GRADUATE. SO THROUGH THE PAST PLAN, THE LEAP, AND SOCIAL



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1 SECURITY, I WAS ON SSDI AT THE TIME. I WENT TO UC BERKELEY AND  
2 GOT MY MASTERS BECAUSE TO BE AN AUDITOR, IT REQUIRED ME TO  
3 HAVE ADVANCE, LIKE IN ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING, THINGS LIKE  
4 THAT. I WENT ON AND DID THAT. I LOVED THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB,  
5 OKAY? I NOW NOT MAKING ANYTHING OFFENSIVE SAYING, I KNOW  
6 BECAUSE MY DISABILITY IS INVISIBLE, SO TO SPEAK, I DIDN'T HAVE  
7 WHAT SOME OF THE PEOPLE HAD TO DEAL WITH. I KNOW THAT. THEY  
8 USED TO ASK ME, THEY USED TO SAY, MY GOD, WHAT IS YOUR  
9 DISABILITY? I NEVER TOLD PEOPLE. IT WASN'T THEIR BUSINESS. I  
10 WAS BORN WITH SCOLIOSIS, I HAD 15 OPERATIONS AS A CHILD BUT I  
11 DID NOT TELL THEM MY BUSINESS. I JUST WENT IN THERE BECAUSE I  
12 KNEW I WAS GOING TO PROVE MYSELF. I HAD A DAUGHTER TO RAISE, I  
13 WAS A SINGLE PARENT, RIGHT? THEN I ENDED UP GETTING MARRIED  
14 BUT ANYWAY, I GOT DIVORCED, SO I REALLY NEEDED THEM. SO I  
15 LOOKED AT IT AND I SAID OH, VERY GOOD. I CAN LOOK AT THESE  
16 FILES AND SEE WHAT ALL THE PAPERWORK WAS, AND I TOOK ADVANTAGE  
17 AND IN WHAT -- WELL, LET'S SEE IN ONE YEAR'S TIME I WAS AT THE  
18 FRONT DESK. I WAS LIKE GOOD BECAUSE AT THE FRONT DESK, I CAN  
19 LEARN EVERYTHING ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION, ALL THE CODE AND  
20 PAMPHLETS. I STARTED TALKING TO THE TAX PREPARERS AND THE TAX  
21 AUDITORS, SO THEY GAVE ME AN ADVANCE. I WASN'T GOING TO STOP  
22 THERE BECAUSE I WANTED THAT 6-FIGURE SALARY THAT I LEFT THERE  
23 WITH. I SAID OH, I KNOW WHAT I WANT TO DO. I WANT TO BE AN  
24 AUDITOR BECAUSE THEY WERE OUT IN THE FIELD. I WANTED TO GET  
25 OUT. SO, I WENT ON TO UC BERKELEY AND GRADUATED AND I BECAME



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1 AN AUDITOR, AND AFTER A WHILE, MY HANDS STARTED GOING OUT. I  
2 STARTED GETTING NERVE DAMAGE FROM DEALING WITH THE COMPUTERS  
3 BUT I DIDN'T LET THAT STOP ME. I LEFT OUT OF THERE AND BECAME  
4 AN ENTREPRENEUR. I RECOMMEND ANY DISABLED PERSON, I'M GLAD YOU  
5 MENTIONED ENTREPRENEURSHIP ALSO. A LOT OF TIMES YOU HAVE A  
6 DISABILITY WHERE YOU CAN'T BE IN AN 8-HOUR JOB. YOU MAY HAVE  
7 TO GO TO THE DOCTOR, THERAPIST, WHATEVER. WHEN YOU ARE AN  
8 ENTREPRENEUR, YOU HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY. THIS IS WHAT I AM  
9 RECOMMENDING TO MY FRIEND HERE, BE AN ENTREPRENEUR. YOU SET  
10 YOUR OWN HOURS. YOU DO SOMETHING YOU REALLY LOVE. AND YOU CAN  
11 MAKE MONEY. I MAKE GOOD MONEY AS AN ENTREPRENEUR, VERY GOOD  
12 MONEY. YOU KNOW WHAT I BECAME? A HOUSE MANAGER/NANNY. I COME  
13 INTO RICH PEOPLE'S HOUSES AND AM LIKE OKAY, YOU NEED THIS, YOU  
14 NEED THAT, LET'S DO IT. THEN I PUT THEIR KIDS IN DIFFERENT  
15 SCHOOLS AND I KNOW ALL THE PROGRAMS. YOU MAKE VERY GOOD MONEY,  
16 THE SAME SIX FIGURES THAT I WAS MAKING AS AN AUDITOR, I CAN  
17 MAKE AND HAVE MADE AS A HOUSE MANAGER. I LOVE KIDS. I START  
18 KEEPING KIDS WHEN I WAS A TEEN BECAUSE MY FAMILY HAD A  
19 DAYCARE. YOU CAN TAKE SOMETHING YOU LOVE, ANYTHING, LIKE MS.  
20 FIELDS TOOK HER COOKIES. YOU CAN TAKE ANYTHING YOU LOVE AND  
21 BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR. I THANK YOU AND HIM BOTH FOR  
22 RECOGNIZING THAT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES CAN GO INTO  
23 ENTREPRENEURSHIP. THANK YOU.

24

25 **EILEEN NORMAN:** THANK YOU, AND NOW I WANT A COOKIE.



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1

2 **RICARDO PEREZ:** I WILL CLARIFY, SHE MENTIONED THE LEAP PROGRAM,  
3 LIMITED EXAM APPOINTMENT PROGRAM. IT'S A STATE BASED PROGRAM  
4 THAT ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS TO ENTER INTO STATE SERVICES PRIORITY.  
5 SO, EVERYONE THAT TYPICALLY APPLIES FOR A STATE JOB, YOU HAVE  
6 TO TAKE AN EXAM, OR THEY'RE CALLING IT AN ASSESSMENT NOW TO BE  
7 CONSIDERED FOR CERTAIN CLASSIFICATIONS, SO THAT'S WHAT THAT  
8 PROGRAM IS. IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE, I CAN TALK YOUR EAR OFF  
9 FOR TWO OR THREE HOURS ON IT. THEY EXPANDED SINCE THE LAST  
10 TIME YOU HAVE SEEN THAT LIST. YOU CAN BE A MANAGER NOW THROUGH  
11 LEAP. OH YEAH. SO, LET ME KNOW IF ANYONE HAS QUESTIONS ON  
12 THAT.

13

14 **SPEAKER:** HELLO, MY NAME IS LISA IRVING, I LIVE IN MILL VALLEY,  
15 CALIFORNIA. I IDENTIFY AS BLIND AND I HAVE MULTIPLE  
16 DISABILITIES. I AM ALSO HIGHLY EDUCATED. I HAVE THREE COLLEGE  
17 DEGREES. MY MASTERS WAS PAID FOR BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
18 REHABILITATION AT \$52,000 FOR AN OUT-OF-STATE SPECIALIZED  
19 DEGREE. I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR WORK SINCE DECEMBER OF 2022. I  
20 WORKED MY BACKSIDE OFF DURING COVID TO COMPLETE MY MASTERS  
21 BECAUSE THAT WAS MY WAY OUT OF A BAD RELATIONSHIP SO I COULD  
22 BE SELF RELIANT. I HASN'T HAPPENED. I HAVE ASKED THE  
23 DEPARTMENT OF REHAB FOR AT LEAST A WARM HAND OFF. THEIR  
24 SOLUTION IS THAT I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THREE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES  
25 PROGRAMS DURING MY TIME WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB. THAT'S



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1 THEIR SOLUTION. I KNOW HOW TO WALK, TALK, CHEW BUBBLE GUM AND  
2 BE A GOOD DISABLED EMPLOYEE. I JUST NEED SOMEBODY TO HELP ME.  
3 PETER, I WAS REFERRED TO YOUR ORGANIZATION BY YOUR SISTER  
4 ORGANIZATION, THE RENAISSANCE WOMEN BUSINESS CENTER. I TOOK AN  
5 ONLINE BUSINESS CLASS, WONDERFUL PEOPLE, LOUSY ACCESS TO THEIR  
6 WORKBOOK. I USE SCREEN READING SOFTWARE. I E-MAILED YOUR  
7 ORGANIZATION TWICE AND I THINK THE CYBER HAMSTERS HAVE EATEN  
8 MY E-MAIL BECAUSE I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM ANYBODY. YEAH, MY  
9 FRIEND PATRICIA HERE IS KICKING MY BUTT AND ENCOURAGING ME TO  
10 LOOK AT ENTREPRENEURSHIP. I'M LOOKING AT IT BUT I'M 61 GUYS. I  
11 WANT TO WORK BUT I GOT A LOT WORKING AGAINST ME. I JUST NEED A  
12 HAND UP. SOMEBODY HELP ME. I HAVE MY BUSINESS CARD AND MY LONG  
13 RESUME WITH ME. IF YOU SEE ME, BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING TO SEE  
14 YOU, I'M HAPPY TO SHARE. WHO WOULD LIKE THE MIC?

15

16 **SPEAKER:** THANK YOU. THANK YOU, I APPRECIATE LEARNING FROM YOU  
17 TWO. MY NAME IS SHIRLEY JOHNSON, I'M FROM SONOMA COUNTY. I  
18 HAVE A COUPLE STORIES. THE DEPARTMENT OF REHAB DID ME GOOD IN  
19 THE 80s. I WAS INJURED AND YOU GUYS PUT ME THROUGH COMMUNITY  
20 COLLEGE IN NAPA AND I GOT MY DEGREE IN ELECTRONICS. I WAS A  
21 BENCH ELECTRICIAN, WHICH WORKED WELL AND I WORKED FOR HEWITT  
22 PACKER FOR 19 YEARS BUT I THINK I GOT IN THROUGH AFFIRMATIVE  
23 ACTION IN 1983 OR SOMETHING. THAT WAS KIND OF NICE. NOW, I  
24 FORGOT WHAT MY SECOND POINT IS, GOD. I'M 66 SO WHEN IT GOES  
25 FLYING AWAY, THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENS. OH, I REALLY, I REALLY



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1 APPRECIATE WHAT YOU GUYS DID FOR ME. I TELL PEOPLE YOU BOUGHT  
2 ME A CAR, SO -- YEAH, RIGHT? BOUGHT ME A CAR, PAID FOR MY  
3 SCHOOLING, BOUGHT MY CLOTHES TO GO FOR MY INTERVIEW. I WAS A  
4 WELFARE MOM, A SINGLE WELFARE MOM AND YOU GUYS LET ME -- I  
5 MEAN I STARTED OUT AT A LOW WAGE BUT I THOUGHT I WOULD GO UP.  
6 IF I STAY ON WELFARE, I WON'T GO UP. SO STAYING AT HOME,  
7 GETTING ALL OF MY PERKS FROM BEING AN AT-HOME MOM, SOCIAL  
8 SECURITY, FOOD STAMPS, IT WAS ABOUT THE SAME, I STARTED AT THE  
9 SAME LEVEL BUT I DID END UP BUYING A HOUSE. YOU CAN'T DO THAT  
10 WHILE YOU'RE ON WELFARE. I REALLY WANT TO THANK YOU. THAT'S MY  
11 NEXT LIFE IS GOING TO BE, A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER, SO LET'S SEE  
12 HOW THAT GOES. THANKS YOU GUYS.

13

14 **RICARDO PEREZ:** THAT'S AWESOME. LOOK, WE'RE NOT GIVING CARS TO  
15 ANYBODY. IF YOU ASK NICELY, IF THE PROGRAM ALLOWS FOR IT, WE  
16 CAN HAMMER SOMETHING OUT.

17

18 **SPEAKER:** HI, DYLAN FOX, I WORK WITH CORNELL UNIVERSITY ON  
19 ACCESSIBILITY OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES. I THINK WE HEARD A LOT  
20 ABOUT A.I. AND SOME OF THESE TOOLS AS A HUGE DISRUPTER. I KNOW  
21 THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT ARE WORRIED ABOUT IT TAKING  
22 JOBS BECAUSE THERE IS THEORETICALLY A LOT OF WHITE COLLAR  
23 ENTRY LEVEL JOBS THAT COULD BE, INSTEAD OF HIRING A PARALEGAL  
24 OR 10 PARALEGALS, YOU GET YOUR A.I. TO DO IT FOR YOU, RIGHT? I  
25 FEEL LIKE THERE IS ALSO POTENTIALLY A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR



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1 A.I. TO HELP PEOPLE, YOU KNOW, WHERE MAYBE BEFORE YOU WOULDN'T  
2 HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SUPPORT THE STAFF THAT YOU NEED TO START A  
3 SMALL BUSINESS, IN TERMS OF SECRETARY, AN ACCOUNTANT, IF A.I.  
4 CAN DO THAT, IT OPENS THE DOOR FOR CERTAIN TYPES OF  
5 ENTREPRENEURSHIP THAT MAKES YOU A LITTLE BIT MORE OF A ONE MAN  
6 BAND. I'M JUST VERY CURIOUS FOR YOURSELVES OR ANYBODY ELSE  
7 HERE, HOW HAVE THESE TECHNOLOGIES BEEN AFFECTING YOU, IF YOU  
8 SEE HOPE OR DESPAIR COMING OUT OF THEM, I WOULD LIKE TO  
9 UNDERSTAND THE LANDSCAPE HERE.

10

11 **RICARDO PEREZ:** SO, I HAVE SEVERAL INDIVIDUALS IN MY CASE LOAD  
12 RIGHT NOW WHO ARE GOING TO SCHOOL AND/OR CERTIFICATIONS FOR  
13 A.I. MACHINE LEARNING. WE HAD DISCUSSIONS AT LENGTH AS FAR AS  
14 WHAT THEY'RE TRYING TO DO IN THE FIELD, AS WELL AS MY  
15 UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS ALL AVAILABLE OUT THERE. SO THERE ARE  
16 A COUPLE KEY THINGS. ONE, I AM LOOKING AT IT AS A FANTASTIC  
17 TOOL BUT THE KEYWORD IS TOOL. IT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO REPLACE  
18 ANYBODY BECAUSE THERE ARE A LOT OF MISTAKES THAT CAN BE MADE  
19 ON THE BACK END IF IT'S FULLY AUTOMATED. WE HAVE PEOPLE THAT  
20 CAN CODE ON PYTHON BUT THEY CAN'T PUT TOGETHER A STRUCTURED  
21 SENTENCE ON A RESUME. THEY WILL USE CHATGPT TO SAY I NEED A  
22 TEMPLATE AND THEY GIVE THEM A TEMPLATE. WE HAVE INDIVIDUALS  
23 WHO ARE TRYING TO FIND THE BEST WAYS TO EITHER LOOK FOR A  
24 PARTICULAR REMOTE JOB AND THEY USE THAT AS A PROMPT. SO AS A  
25 TOOL, FANTASTIC. NOW FOR THE MORE COMPLICATED SIDE, BEING ABLE



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1 TO STRUCTURE ANYTHING TO, YOU KNOW, FORMULATE THOUGHT  
2 SENTENCES LIKE WE CAN IS YEARS AWAY. SO, AS FAR AS ANYTHING  
3 BEING FULLY AUTOMATED, AGAIN, NOT WORRIED ABOUT IT. THE  
4 INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE CURRENTLY GOING TO SCHOOL, THEY ARE TRYING  
5 TO LEARN AS FAST AS THEY CAN BECAUSE BY THE TIME THEY ARE  
6 DONE, WHATEVER THEY JUST LEARNED IS NOW OLD AND EXPIRED. SO,  
7 IDEALLY INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE GOING INTO THIS LANDSCAPE ARE  
8 GOING TO TRY TO FIX IT SO THAT THE CORRECT THINGS SHOULD BE  
9 AUTOMATED BUT THEN ANYTHING FOR INSTANCE, IF YOU GO ON A  
10 WEBSITE AND DO ANY OF THOSE CHATBOTS AND IT DOESN'T RECOGNIZE  
11 ANYTHING YOU ARE PUTTING IN THERE, THOSE ARE THE THINGS THAT  
12 REALLY DO NEED IMPROVEMENT AND THAT'S WHERE I SEE IT BEING A  
13 VERY USEFUL TOOL. ANYTHING ELSE LIKE AGAIN, I'M NOT WORRIED  
14 ABOUT IT. EVERYTHING ON MY CASE LOAD ALSO AREN'T WORRIED ABOUT  
15 IT. THERE ARE SOME SOFTWARE ENGINEERS THAT USE IT TO CHECK  
16 THEIR OWN CODE, WHICH IS FINE. YOU CAN LEARN HOW TO WRITE CODE  
17 ON THERE, IT WILL SHOW YOU A LOT OF BASIC THINGS THAT YOU CAN  
18 FIND, AND YOU KNOW, AND SOMETIMES IT CAN HELP YOU MAKE MACROS  
19 LIKE ON YOUR COMPUTER AND HOW TO DO THINGS AUTOMATICALLY AND  
20 WHATNOT. A LOT OF BENEFITS, BUT AS LONG AS WE FOCUS ON THE  
21 IDEA THAT IT'S A TOOL.

22

23 **PETER DEHAAS:** I WOULD ECHO THAT. I THINK IT'S A TREMENDOUS  
24 TOOL THAT WE DON'T EVEN KNOW ALL OF THE POSSIBILITIES YET, BUT  
25 IT DOESN'T ESCAPE THE NEED FOR HUMAN INTERACTION AND HUMAN



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1 SUPPORT AND HUMAN -- YOU KNOW, BECAUSE YOU CAN TELL SOMEBODY  
2 TO TRY TO DRAFT A BUSINESS PLAN USING A.I. BUT TO YOUR POINT,  
3 IT'S NOT GOING TO NECESSARILY PUT OUT SOMETHING THAT IS  
4 ACCURATE OR YOU STILL NEED SOMEBODY TO HELP YOU PROOF IT, BUT  
5 I THINK THERE IS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL AS A TOOL. I HAVEN'T  
6 GIVEN THOUGHT TO A.I. REPLACING PEOPLE BUT AT THE SPEED WHICH  
7 IT'S DEVELOPING IS FASTER THAN WE CAN PROCESS WHAT IT'S  
8 ACTUALLY GOING TO DO. I'M OF THE MINDSET THAT WE WILL ALWAYS  
9 NEED HUMAN INTERACTION AND A.I. CAN'T TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO  
10 WRITE. I MEAN IT CAN, IT COULD POTENTIALLY BE A TOOL TO HELP  
11 THEM TO LEARN HOW TO WRITE, BUT YOU STILL NEED TO KNOW HOW TO  
12 PROMPT IT AND HAVE THAT EDUCATION TO LEARN HOW AND SUPPORT TO  
13 UTILIZE IT CORRECTLY.

14

15 **RICARDO PEREZ:** YEAH, IT'S REALLY NOT PERFECT. YOU JUST  
16 REMINDED ME VERY RECENTLY ONE OF MY COLLEAGUES THAT WAS A  
17 MANAGER WAS HIRING SOMEBODY AND THEY COULD TELL THEY WERE  
18 READING OFF AN A.I. PROMPT. YOU CAN SET UP AN A.I. CHATBOT TO  
19 LISTEN TO A CONVERSATION AND IF IT'S A QUESTION, THEY WILL  
20 SEARCH THE WEB AND FIND YOU THE MOST PREDICTABLE ANSWER. THE  
21 PROBLEM IS WHEN IT COMES TO WORK FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF  
22 REHABILITATION, OUR CLASSIFICATIONS ARE VERY GENERIC, SO FOR  
23 INSTANCE MY CLASSIFICATION IS KNOWN AS A GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAM  
24 ANALYST, RIGHT? SO CHATGPT OR WHATEVER THE A.I. PROGRAM LOOKS  
25 AT THE ANALYST AND FORMULATES WHAT IT IS UNDERNEATH AN



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1 ANALYST. THEY WILL REPEAT WHATEVER THEY READ ON THE SCREEN AND  
2 IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH WORKFORCE OR JOB SEEKERS OR  
3 DISABILITIES OR NOTHING LIKE THAT. THAT'S WHERE THE HUMAN  
4 ELEMENT COMES IN. YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE READING AND  
5 CHECK TO MAKE SURE IT MAKES SENSE AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT'S  
6 RELEVANT TO THE THING YOU ARE NEEDING.

7

8 **EILEEN NORMAN:** ARE THERE ANY OTHER HANDS, COMMENTS, ANYTHING  
9 FROM ZOOM? OH, YOU HAVE ONE OVER HERE.

10

11 **SPEAKER:** THANK YOU. I WANT TO ASK ABOUT PEOPLE WITH  
12 DISABILITIES AS EMPLOYERS OF PERSONAL ATTENDANTS. AS RICHARD  
13 MENTIONED, I HAVE FRIENDS, I DON'T NEED THIS YET, BUT THE TIME  
14 WILL COME, WHO ARE FACED WITH STATE LIMITED HOURLY RATES,  
15 WHICH IS FURTHER LIMITED BY THE COUNTIES. IN SAN FRANCISCO,  
16 IT'S MINIMUM WAGE, WHICH IS \$18-SOMETHING, WHICH SOUNDS OKAY,  
17 BUT PEOPLE DOING THE SAME WORK IN AN INSTITUTION WHO ARE PART  
18 OF A UNION ARE PAID MUCH HIGHER THAN THAT. SO, THERE IS EVERY  
19 INCENTIVE TO USE THIS AS A TRAINING GROUND AND THEN MOVE ON TO  
20 THE HIGHER PAYING JOBS. THE UNION WAS DELIGHTED WHEN THEY GOT  
21 THAT RAISE AND I AM DELIGHTED FOR THEM BUT WE HAVE LEFT  
22 HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO THE PROGRAM WORKS PRETTY  
23 WELL IF YOU HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER DOING THIS FOR YOU BECAUSE  
24 THEY HAVE ADDITIONAL INCOME TO HELP YOU DO THIS CARE. IF YOU  
25 ARE HIRING SOMEONE FROM THE OUTSIDE YOU CAN COUNT ON THE



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1 QUESTION OF TRAINING, CERTIFICATION -- NOT CERTIFICATION BUT  
2 CHECKING REFERENCES, WHICH IS TO MANY CLIENTS NOT ADEQUATE.  
3 THERE IS THE NEW VERIFICATION SYSTEM WHICH IS A SUPER  
4 SURVEILLANCE AND IT PRESENTS MANY PROBLEMS FOR A LOT OF  
5 PEOPLE. I MEAN CALIFORNIA, IT'S A FEDERAL MANDATE, BUT STILL  
6 IT'S A PROBLEM. THE OTHER PROBLEMS ARE PEOPLE JUST DON'T SHOW  
7 UP ONE MORNING. COUNTIES ARE SUPPOSED TO HAVE BACK UP SYSTEMS,  
8 BUT THOSE BACK UP SYSTEMS DON'T WORK WELL ENOUGH. THERE IS  
9 OFTEN NO BACK UP. EVEN IF YOU KNOW A COUPLE DAYS IN ADVANCE, I  
10 NEED SOMEONE FOR THE WEEKEND. IT OFTEN DOESN'T WORK. THE  
11 PEOPLE SERVED BY THIS PROGRAM ARE THE MOST SEVERELY DISABLED,  
12 OBVIOUSLY PEOPLE THAT CAN'T DO THE MANY ACTIVITIES OF DAILY  
13 LIVING ARE VERY DISABLED. WHEN THEY ARE LEFT IN THEIR BED IN  
14 THEIR OWN FILTH, WE HAVE A PROBLEM. I DON'T HAVE A SOLUTION  
15 FOR THIS, I DON'T HAVE A SUGGESTION FOR THIS. I THINK IT'S  
16 GOING TO TAKE SOMETHING THAT GOES BEYOND ANY ONE LOCALITY OR  
17 ANY ONE PROGRAM BUT IT'S AN URGENT PROBLEM AND IT'S NOT ON THE  
18 TABLE, AS FAR AS I CAN TELL. PEOPLE THAT I KNOW THAT COMPLAIN  
19 TO THEIR COUNTY AUTHORITIES ARE ESSENTIALLY TOLD WE'RE DOING  
20 WHAT WE CAN. SO WE NEED SOMETHING BETTER THERE. ISN'T THIS  
21 ITEM NUMBER 1 IN INDEPENDENT LIVING? ISN'T THIS WHAT ED  
22 ROBERTS SET OUT TO DO, TO NOT BE INSTITUTIONALIZED BUT GET  
23 PERSONAL SERVICES AT HOME TO ALLOW US TO LIVE AT HOME IN  
24 COMMUNITY. WITHOUT THE SUPPORT, IT DOESN'T WORK. THAT'S WHY I  
25 WANTED TO PUT THAT PROBLEM ON THE TABLE.



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1

2 **PETER DEHAAS:** IT'S DEFINITELY A COMPLEX ONE. MY FATHER JUST  
3 PASSED IN A SUPPORTED LIVING FACILITY IN NOVEMBER. MY MOTHER  
4 IS STILL IN THAT FACILITY. MY DAD WAS OPEN TO RECEIVING CARE  
5 IN HOME AND MY MOTHER NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THE LOSS. SHE  
6 FELT LIKE IT WAS INTRUSION OR JUST LOSS OF -- BUT OF COURSE  
7 SHE HAD HER COMPLAINTS ABOUT BEING IN A SUPPORTED FACILITY AS  
8 WELL. WHAT YOU'RE SAYING WALTER IS ACCURATE. THERE JUST ISN'T  
9 ENOUGH SUPPORT AT THE LEVEL, AT A LIVABLE WAGE, ESPECIALLY IN  
10 SAN FRANCISCO AND RELIABLE. THEN YOU HAVE PEOPLE GOING TO WORK  
11 FOR FACILITIES AND THEN THEY ARE UNIONIZED IN RECEIVING A  
12 HIGHER WAGE. SO I THINK IT'S DEFINITELY A CONVERSATION THAT WE  
13 NEED TO BE HAVING AND IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT YES, COUNTIES ARE  
14 JUST TURNING THEIR BACKS AND SAYING WE'RE DOING WHAT WE CAN. I  
15 THINK THERE IS DEFINITELY ROOM THERE FOR POLICY TO CHANGE  
16 THAT.

17

18 **SPEAKER:** OKAY, LAST WEEK WE WENT TO SENATOR McGUIRE'S OFFICE  
19 AND WHEN I SAY WE, I MEAN MARIN CIL. ONE OF THE THINGS WE HAD,  
20 AGENDAS WE TALKED ABOUT WAS IN-HOME CARE. WE KNOW RIGHT NOW IT  
21 IS A BIG SHORTAGE OF IN-HOME CARE PROVIDERS. IT'S FOR A NUMBER  
22 OF REASONS. WE HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT ARE DISABLED, A LOT  
23 OF BABY BOOMERS. I'M ONE OF THEM THAT QUALIFIED FOR IN-HOME  
24 CARE BUT I LET MINE GO FOR THE SIMPLE FACT THAT WHEN I MOVED  
25 TO SAUSALITO, WHEN I WAS IN BERKELEY, IT WAS ALL GOOD. WHEN I



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1 MOVED TO SAUSALITO, PEOPLE WOULD NOT COME WHERE I LIVE AND  
2 THEY WERE IN MARIN COUNTY, THE MAJORITY OF THE WORKERS COME  
3 FROM SAN RAFAEL. WHY WOULD THEY COME TO SAUSALITO TO GET PAID  
4 THAT LOW WAGE, WHEN I HAVE A MINIMUM AMOUNT OF HOURS BECAUSE  
5 MY DISABILITY THEY SAY IS NOT AS SEVERE RIGHT NOW. I LET IT  
6 ALL GO. THAT IS A CURRENT PROBLEM THAT WE'RE FIGHTING FOR.  
7 WE'RE FIGHTING FOR SEVERAL THINGS. WE'RE FIGHTING FOR A LIVING  
8 WAGE, FOR THE IN-HOME CARE PROVIDERS. WE'RE ALSO FIGHTING FOR  
9 NOT TO GET CUTS BECAUSE THEY ARE CUTTING IN-HOME CARE HOURS  
10 FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT ARE SEVERELY DISABLED. THEY ARE  
11 CUTTING THEIR HOURS. THEY ARE ALSO CUTTING AN UNDOCUMENTED  
12 PERSON FROM GETTING IN-HOME CARE. THAT'S THE NEWEST CUTS. WE  
13 KNOW IT'S A PROBLEM AND I THINK ALL THE ADVOCATES IN THE ROOM  
14 AND YOU CAN TELL ALL YOUR FRIENDS THAT WE NEED -- HE'S RIGHT,  
15 WE NEED TO WORK ON THIS ISSUE. NOW ME PERSONALLY, I HIRE MY  
16 NIECE. I PAY HER DIRECTLY OUT OF MY POCKET. IF I NEED  
17 SOMETHING DONE, I AM GOING TO HAVE IT DONE, WHATEVER MEANS  
18 NECESSARY. IF I HAVE TO PAY HER, YOU BETTER LISTEN TO THIS,  
19 WORK WITH YOUR FAMILY MEMBERS, WORK WITH YOUR NEIGHBORS, WORK  
20 WITH YOUR FRIENDS. DON'T GO WITHOUT YOUR IN-HOME CARE. IF YOU  
21 CAN POSSIBLY HAVE SOMEONE TO WORK WITH YOU, FAMILY MEMBERS,  
22 FRIENDS, WHOEVER TO WORK WITH YOU ON SUSTAINING YOUR LIFE  
23 BECAUSE I LIVE IN A SENIOR COMPLEX IN SAUSALITO AND A LOT OF  
24 MY NEIGHBORS, THEY DEPEND SOLELY -- I DO NOT, I'M MORE  
25 INDEPENDENT, BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE DEPEND ON IN-HOME CARE



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1 PROVIDERS FOR EVERYTHING. HE'S RIGHT, WE SHOULD BE UP IN ARMS  
2 ABOUT THIS. I DON'T KNOW WHY THERE IS NO MORE PUSH. I KNOW  
3 HERE AT MARIN COUNTY, WE'RE PUSHING. I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OTHER  
4 COUNTIES PUSH THAT HARD. BERKELEY SHOULD BE PUSHING, ALAMEDA  
5 COUNTY SHOULD BE NUMBER ONE PUSHING WHERE I CAME FROM BEFORE I  
6 MOVED TO SAUSALITO. IN SAN FRANCISCO, WE SHOULD BE PUSHING  
7 THIS ISSUE. IT IS A VERY VIABLE ONE. WE NEED IN-HOME CARE.  
8 DISABLED PEOPLE NEED PEOPLE TO COME INTO THEIR HOMES AND HELP  
9 THEM WITH THINGS. IF YOU GO TO WORK, YOU REALLY NEED IT. SO  
10 THAT'S MY SAY ON THAT, THANKS.

11

12 **EILEEN NORMAN:** THANK YOU. SO WE ONLY HAVE A COUPLE MINUTES  
13 LEFT AND SO WE WANT TO WRAP THIS CONVERSATION UP. I HAVE A FEW  
14 THINGS THAT I CAN SUMMARIZE. I AM SURE OUR NOTE TAKERS HAVE A  
15 BETTER SUMMARY THAN I DO. SO I HEARD, YOU KNOW, STILL 80% OF  
16 THE DISABILITY POPULATION IS UNEMPLOYED. PEOPLE WITH  
17 DISABILITIES, THEY DON'T GET EQUAL PAY AND WE NEED LIVING  
18 WAGES. EMPLOYERS HAVING THIS FALSE BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE WITH  
19 DISABLES WILL COST ADDITIONAL MONEY. FOLKS LIKE THE DEPARTMENT  
20 OF REHAB, GOVERNOR, STATE ARCHITECT, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS,  
21 THEY NEED TO SIT DOWN WITH A DISABILITY COMMUNITY TO HEAR THIS  
22 COLLECTIVE FEEDBACK AND DIFFERENT PROGRAMS SIMILARLY NEED TO  
23 BE WORKING TOGETHER SEAMLESSLY TO PROVIDE SUPPORT. WE NEED  
24 BETTER GUIDANCE OF GETTING FROM COLLEGE TO WORK AND PEOPLE  
25 WITH DISABILITIES NEED TO BE INCLUDE IN THE CONVERSATIONS



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1 AROUND A.I. ADVANCEMENTS TO SUPPORT US IN OUR WORK IN  
2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEFINITELY HIGHER WAGES AND IMPROVEMENT  
3 FOR HOME CARE WORK, THE HOME CARE WORK NETWORK BECAUSE WITHOUT  
4 SUPPORT FROM HOME CARE WORKERS, IT DOESN'T WORK AT ALL. SO  
5 HOPEFULLY I CAPTURED THAT. IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT I DIDN'T,  
6 PLEASE COME AND TALK TO ME AFTERWARDS. YES?

7

8 **SPEAKER:** YEAH, JUST RECEIVED A FEW MINUTES AGO A COMMENT FROM  
9 THE CHAT TO TOUCH ON THE POINT ON A.I. THAT YOU JUST  
10 MENTIONED. AN INDIVIDUAL JOINING US VIRTUALLY SAID CHATGPT CAN  
11 BE A GOOD TOOL BUT YOU NEED TO PROOFREAD EVERYTHING YOU READ  
12 CAREFULLY.

13

14 **EILEEN NORMAN:** ABSOLUTELY. THANK YOU. THERE ARE MORE  
15 QUESTIONS. WE'RE GOING TO -- THEY GOT TO BE QUICK QUESTIONS  
16 BECAUSE THEN WE HAVE TO TAKE A BREAK AND DO ALL THESE FUN  
17 THINGS.

18

19 **SPEAKER:** THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY, CAN YOU HEAR ME OKAY?

20

21 **EILEEN NORMAN:** YES.

22

23 **SPEAKER:** SO THE QUESTION IS, DRUM ROLL PLEASE, CAN BOTH OF  
24 YOU, THANK YOU, EXPLAIN THE NUANCES OF HOW TO INCREASE INCOME  
25 WITHOUT THE DANGER IT WAS MENTIONED IN ONE OF YOUR TOP LISTS



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1 OF TOPICS, HOW TO INCREASE INCOME WITHOUT LOSING THE BENEFITS.  
2 I'M A PARTICULAR PERSON WITH HIDDEN DISABILITIES AND YOU KNOW,  
3 I LIKE TO INCREASE MY INCOME BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THAT  
4 WITHOUT LOSING MY BENEFITS. SO, ARE THERE -- THAT'S ONE. PART  
5 B WOULD BE IF I WERE -- IF I OR ANYONE IN MY POSITION WERE TO  
6 GET A JOB, AT WHAT POINT IN THAT NUANCE PROCESS DO WE COME OUT  
7 ABOUT HOW WE NEED SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS WITHOUT TRIGGERING  
8 THE STIGMA.

9

10 **RICARDO PEREZ:** I WILL START WITH THE SECOND ONE. I THINK WE  
11 WILL TALK MORE ABOUT IT TOMORROW MORNING, I'M GOING TO TALK  
12 MORE ABOUT IT TOMORROW MORNING. BASICALLY IT'S ON A NEED-TO-  
13 KNOW BASIS. EVEN THEN, YOU ONLY GIVE SO MUCH INFORMATION. A  
14 LOT OF WHAT YOU REQUIRE FOR ACCOMMODATION IS SOMETHING THEY  
15 ALREADY OFFER. IF YOU NEED MORE TIME, A SEPARATE ROOM,  
16 STANDING DESK, ALL OF THAT TYPICALLY IS ALREADY GIVEN. SO, AS  
17 FAR AS THAT, AGAIN, SEPARATE CONVERSATION BUT YOU KNOW, IT'S  
18 VERY INDIVIDUALIZED. NOW FOR THE FIRST ONE, WHAT WE HAVE BEEN  
19 ENCOURAGING ALL OF OUR JOB SEEKERS TO DO IS OBVIOUSLY GET  
20 PERMANENT POSITIONS, THINGS THAT DO HAVE BENEFITS ATTACHED TO  
21 IT. LATELY, I HAVE BEEN HELPING A LOT MORE INDIVIDUALS  
22 UNDERSTAND HOW TO GET A STATE JOB, HOW TO WORK FOR THE CITY  
23 AND COUNTY, HOW TO WORK FOR ANYONE BUT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT  
24 BECAUSE THE BENEFITS START DAY ONE. SO, IF YOU ARE ABLE TO  
25 OBTAIN SOMETHING LIKE THAT AND OVERALL, IN GOVERNMENT SPHERE,



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1 NO ONE LOOKS AT YOUR WORK APP, NO ONE LOOKS AT HOW LONG YOU  
2 HAVE BEEN DOING THINGS. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF WHAT SKILLS ARE  
3 RELEVANT TODAY. IF ANYTHING, THAT'S PROBABLY THE ROUTE I WOULD  
4 ENCOURAGE TO GO INTO AND SEE IF THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN GET  
5 INTO, EVEN FOR A LIMITED TERM OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, IT'S  
6 STILL CONSIDERED GOVERNMENT EMPLOYMENT AND BENEFITS DAY ONE.

7

8 **PETER DEHAAS:** DISCLOSING OR NOT DISCLOSING ON THE FRONT END?

9

10 **RICARDO PEREZ:** IT DEPENDS. IF YOU'RE GOING TO DISCLOSE, IT'S  
11 STRICTLY BASED ON THE WORK ITSELF. IF YOUR BARRIER HINDERS YOU  
12 FROM DOING WORK STRAIGHT UP, THEN YOU MAY NEED TO HAVE A  
13 DISCUSSION. HOWEVER, IF IT'S NOT, IF IT'S SOMETHING COMPLETELY  
14 DIFFERENT, IT DOESN'T AFFECT YOUR DUTY STATEMENT OR ESSENTIAL  
15 FUNCTIONS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DISCLOSE.

16

17 **SPEAKER:** RICARDO, CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE PAST PLAN WHERE SHE  
18 COULD KEEP HER JOB AND KEEP HER SSI OR SSDI AND YOU PUT IT  
19 INTO AN ACCOUNT AS A PROGRAM FOR THAT. I HEARD IT HAS CHANGED.  
20 CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THAT RICARDO?

21

22 **RICARDO PEREZ:** I'M TOLD THAT WE'RE REALLY OUT OF TIME.  
23 HOWEVER, YOU CAN REACH OUT TO US SEPARATE IF YOU LIKE AND I  
24 CAN EXPLAIN THAT PAST PROGRAM IN ADDITIONAL DETAIL.

25



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1 **PETER DEHAAS:** IF YOU ARE PURSUING ENTREPRENEURSHIP, I AM HAPPY  
2 TO TALK ABOUT SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST OR ABLE ACCOUNTS.

3

4 **EILEEN NORMAN:** AND YOUR QUESTION ALSO MADE ME READ THAT I  
5 MISSED MY FIRST TWO BULLET POINTS WHICH IS BENEFITS REFORM AND  
6 ACCESS TO FINANCIAL LITERACY. SO THANK YOU. EXCELLENT, HELP ME  
7 THANK OUR PANELISTS TODAY AND OUR INTERPRETERS AND OUR NOTE  
8 TAKERS AND OUR TIME KEEPER AND ALL THE OTHER PEOPLE THAT ARE  
9 MAKING -- WONDERFUL. SO WE'RE BREAKING FROM 2:30 TO 3:00 AND  
10 THEN WE HAVE MORE FUN THINGS AHEAD. SO HAVE A GREAT BREAK.

11



*Broadcasting Government*