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EMPOWERING ALMATY'S DISABLED WORKFORCE: ACTION FOR INCLUSIVE LABOR MARKET

The inclusion of people with disabilities in all spheres of public life is an important political issue in the country. However, according to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan, only 25% of people with disabilities under the age of 55 are employed in Kazakhstan. Most of them are predominantly employed in low-paid industries, as well as in areas where physical labor is required. The state implements numerous programs, projects, and creates favorable conditions for people with disabilities, but employment remains consistently low. My research reveals a multifaceted issue: employers' reluctance to offer suitable conditions for individuals with disabilities, hindering their access to common infrastructure. In Almaty, my findings indicate that some individuals opt to reside with family members who can fulfill their basic needs. Additionally, there is a deficiency in adequate education and experience among this demographic. The author conducted structured and unstructured face-to-face interviews and telephone surveys with various people with disabilities, employers, and government agencies to understand the barriers to employment for people with disabilities in Almaty. Most of the previous research has focused on people with disabilities in other regions of Kazakhstan, while my research has focused on the problems of people with disabilities in Almaty. In conclusion, the author makes recommendations to the local administration and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Key words: Disability, social policy, labor market, social inclusion, inclusive education, barriers to employment.

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Алматы қаласында мүмкіндігі шектеулі адамдардың әлеуетін арттыру: инклюзивті еңбек нарығын құру бойынша іс-шаралар

Мүмкіндігі шектеулі жандарды қоғам өмірінің барлық саласына қосу – еліміздегі маңызды саяси мәселе. Алайда, ҚР Еңбек және халықты әлеуметтік қорғау министрлігінің мәліметі бойынша, Қазақстанда 55 жасқа дейінгі мүгедектердің 25% ғана жұмыспен қамтылған. Олардың көпшілігі негізінен жалақысы төмен өндірістерде немесе физикалық еңбекті қажет ететін салаларда жұмыс істейді. Мемлекет көптеген бағдарламалар мен жобаларды жүзеге асыруда, мүмкіндігі шектеулі жандарға қолайлы жағдай жасауда, бірақ жұмыспен қамту деңгейі тұрақты түрде төмен болып отыр. Менің зерттеулерім көп қырлы проблеманы көрсетеді: жұмыс берушілердің мүгедектерге қолайлы жағдай жасай алмауы, бұл олардың қоғамдық инфрақұрылымға қол жеткізуін қиындатады. Алматы қаласы бойынша менің зерттеулерім көрсеткендей, кейбір мүмкіндігі шектеулі адамдар өздерінің негізгі қажеттіліктерін қанағаттандыра алатын туыстарымен тұруды қалайды. Сондай-ақ, бұл халық арасында тиісті білім мен тәжірибе де жетіспейді. Автор Алматы қаласындағы мүгедектерді жұмысқа орналастырудағы кедергілерді түсіну үшін әртүрлі мүгедектермен, жұмыс берушілермен және мемлекеттік органдармен құрылымдық жеке сұхбаттар мен телефон арқылы сауалнамалар жүргізді. Бұрынғы зерттеулердің көпшілігі Қазақстанның басқа аймақтарындағы мүгедектерге арналса, менің зерттеулерім Алматыдағы мүгедектердің мәселелеріне арналды. Қорытындылай келе, автор жергілікті әкімшілікке және Қазақстан Республикасы Еңбек және халықты әлеуметтік қорғау министрлігіне ұсыныстар жасайды.

Түйін сөздер: Мүгедектік, әлеуметтік саясат, еңбек нарығы, әлеуметтік инклюзия, инклюзивті

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Усиление трудового потенциала инвалидов Алматы: меры по созданию инклюзивного рынка труда

Включение людей с инвалидностью во все сферы общественной жизни является важной политической проблемой в стране. Однако, согласно данным Министерства труда и социальной защиты населения Республики Казахстан, только 25% инвалидов в возрасте до 55 лет заняты на работе в Казахстане. Большинство из них работают в основном в низкооплачиваемых отраслях, а также в сферах, где требуется физический труд. Государство реализует множество программ и проектов, создает благоприятные условия для инвалидов, но уровень занятости остается стабильно низким. Мои исследования показывают многоаспектную проблему: неохоту работодателей предоставлять подходящие условия для индивидуумов с ограниченными возможностями, что затрудняет им доступ к общественной инфраструктуре. В Алматы мои исследования указывают на то, что некоторые люди предпочитают проживать с родственниками, которые могут удовлетворить их базовые потребности. Кроме того, среди данной группы населения наблюдается недостаток должного образования и опыта. Автор провел структурированные и неструктурированные личные интервью и телефонные опросы с различными инвалидами, работодателями и государственными органами, чтобы понять препятствия для трудоустройства инвалидов в Алматы. Большинство предыдущих исследований сосредоточено на инвалидах в других регионах Казахстана, в то время как мое исследование сосредоточено на проблемах инвалидов в Алматы. В заключение автор делает рекомендации местной администрации и Министерству труда и социальной защиты населения Республики Казахстан.

Ключевые слова: Инвалидность, социальная политика, рынок труда, социальная инклюзия, инклюзивное образование, барьеры для трудоустройства.

Introduction

In Almaty, as in other cities in Kazakhstan, there are measures to support the employment of people with disabilities. This can include training and rehabilitation, special technologies and equipment, and financial support. One important tool is the law «On Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities» in Kazakhstan, which protects the rights of people with disabilities and supports their employment (“On social protection of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Kazakhstan” Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan). In addition, there are several organizations in Almaty that are engaged in supporting the employment of people with disabilities. They offer assistance in finding a job, training and rehabilitation, as well as provide financial assistance. Such organizations also work with employers to improve the accessibility and acceptability of jobs for people with disabilities.

Since 2012, actions were taken in Kazakhstan to exercise the Convention on the Rights of Disabled, which was ratified to ensure the inclusive company. In 2018, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection completed a three-stage action plan, which is aimed at improving the quality of life and ensuring the rights of people with disabilities, and developed a

national plan until 2025. The main goal of this plan is to integrate people with disabilities into the socio-economic life of the country through the creation of conditions for their economic independence and high-quality employment (MLSP, 2019). According to statistics on January 1, 2022, more than 700 thousand people with certain types of disability were registered in Kazakhstan, of which 466 thousand were at working age. However, only more than 110 thousand people from this group were employed, which is a rather low indicator. More than 57 thousand people with disabilities live in the city of Almaty, of which more than 40 thousand people of able-bodied revival, only 29% are employed according to the employment center of the city of Almaty. According to the analytical report of the Enbek.kz electronic labor exchange, the share of vacancies available for persons with disabilities, in 2023 amounted to 3.8% of Almaty, 94 vacancies for 551 jobs from the total number of vacancies on the site (about 15 thousand) Mostly these vacancies are physical difficult work both for a full time and social jobs. In order to employ unemployed citizens, subsidizing wages is used in the creation of social jobs that are available for no longer than 12 months. The employer determines the size and pays wages, but the state reimburses 35% of this size, but not

more than 20 monthly calculation indicators (MCI). If the employer agrees and there is a vacancy, the participant may be employed on a permanent basis before the expiration of the employment contract.

One of the ways that are considered effective in the world to include people with disabilities in production activities is the installation of quotas for employment at enterprises. In Kazakhstan, in 2016 there were changes in the legislation, according to which a quota was installed on jobs for people with disabilities, which accounts for 2 to 4% of the total number of employees, not taking into account difficult work and places with harmful and dangerous working conditions. If we are talking about enterprises, then for those who have the number of employees from 50 to 100 people, the quota is 2%, from 101 to 250 people – 3%, and for those with more than 250 people, quota is 4%. Compared to most countries of the world, where this figure is 6%. Each year, all over Kazakhstan, the quota system includes approximately 3 thousand organizations of them more than 540 organizations in the city of Almaty, for which a quota of jobs for disabled people for 2022. 91% of them do not use employment quotas. The presence of unfilled quotas in enterprises is of concern, because this can be explained by the fact that, despite the desire of persons with disabilities to work, they ignore the jobs guaranteed to them in accordance with quotas. This is because the jobs on offer are often unattractive and, in some cases, simply not suitable for people with disabilities.

However, there are still many barriers to employment for people with disabilities in Almaty and other cities in Kazakhstan. These may include inadequate infrastructure, insufficient skills and resources to support employment, and inadequate access to the labor market. It is necessary to continue working to remove these barriers and improve working conditions for people with disabilities to increase their participation in society and improve their quality of life. The introduction of legislative measures that ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the workplace, as well as the development of infrastructure and employment support programs can help. Public campaigns and educational programs can also play an important role in raising awareness and improving the acceptability of work for people with disabilities.

The topic of employment for people with disabilities is relevant because people with disabilities have the right to work and economic independence, and it is important for their inclusion in society. However, there are still barriers to

employment for these people, such as stereotypes and lack of accessible jobs. The «barrier-free environment» currently being formed in Kazakhstan is not very effective and is more of a declaration for the sake of a tick in the report. The problems faced by people with disabilities are many, so the solution of these problems has become an urgent task for the state, whose main goal is the active involvement of people with disabilities in the workforce. Employment of people with disabilities brings them many positive changes. First, it gives them the opportunity to gain financial independence, which improves their economic situation. In Kazakhstan, on average, people with disabilities receive 57,000 tenge per month. Secondly, employment can improve their self-esteem and increase their level of dignity. Thirdly, work can provide them with social contacts and an opportunity to participate in social life. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of RK, employed people with disabilities in Almaty was only 26% of the total number of working age people with disabilities (National plan until 2025). General, employment can positively affect the quality of life of people with disabilities, improving their emotional and financial condition.

The main problems of employment of people with disabilities include:

1) lack of accessibility: many workplaces and environments are not adapted for people with disabilities, which prevents them from joining the workforce.

2) Unfavorable stereotypes: The opinion of society and employers that people with disabilities are less productive and incapable of performing work compared to others is one of the reasons for discrimination in employment.

3) Insufficient legislative measures: insufficient protection of the rights of people with disabilities in the legislation may hinder their employment or the provision of equal opportunities at work.

4) Lack of resources: Lack of appropriate resources, such as adapted technology, support for social services and resources necessary for employment and a successful career, can significantly limit the opportunities of people with disabilities in the labor market.

The problem raised in the article is limited access for people with disabilities to labor resources in the city of Almaty, Kazakhstan. This problem is relevant because people with disabilities often face barriers to finding work, and many of them are forced to live on government benefits. The article calls on employers and policy makers to take action to create jobs that are accessible to people with disabilities. This

includes creating more inclusive workplaces where people with disabilities can perform tasks according to their abilities and needs. The article also calls on politicians to take action to eliminate discrimination in the workplace and promote accessibility of jobs for people with disabilities.

In general, the problem of accessibility of work resources for people with disabilities is important and relevant in Almaty, as in many other cities around the world. Solving this problem will not only improve the lives of people with disabilities, but also contribute to economic growth and the development of society as a whole, by using their potential and talents.

A detailed analysis of the literature is required, demonstrating the achievements of Kazakhstani and foreign researchers, as a result of which it will be possible to formulate the main objectives of solving the problem.

Literature review

The literature review will review existing studies that analyze the barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities, the relationship between hiring people with disabilities and labor productivity, and the role of social employment and the quota system.

«Being a Hewmann» is the memoir of Judith Hewmann, a disability rights activist who has been at the forefront of the disability rights movement for more than four decades. The book recounts her life as a disabled person and her struggle for disability rights, including her sit-in, the landmark protest that led to the passage of the first-ever disability rights law in the United States. Throughout the book, Huhmann stresses the importance of disability rights, inclusion and accessibility, and highlights the challenges people with disabilities face in society. She also talks about her personal journey of self-discovery, including her struggle with depression and her journey to acceptance of her disability. From this book we can understand that employment for a disabled person can contribute to socialization, as a job or occupation can provide the disabled person with opportunities to interact with other people, establish social connections and a sense of belonging to society (Amber Hikes,2021).

According to Garcia-Ael and Cuadrado-Gordillo the authors are developing and testing a mediation model that explores how Discrimination against people with disabilities in the workplace is associated with negative attitudes towards them, lack

of accommodation and lower job satisfaction. They believe that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities are an important factor in discrimination, and job satisfaction mediates the relationship between discrimination and the intention to quit a job (Garcia-Ael,2018).

Issues, Practices, and Aspirations (Owen et al.,2016) – The authors examine employers' issues, practices, and aspirations. on the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector. They find that employers are concerned about the cost and productivity of housing, potential legal liability, and negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. However, they also found that employers who hire people with disabilities report positive experiences and benefits, including increased employee morale and loyalty(Owen,2016).

The authors Nguyen, T. and Chan, F. (2017) explore the process of workplace modification for people with disabilities and how it affects inclusion. at work. They believe that successful workplace modification requires a collaborative approach between employer, employee and disability service provider. They also found that successful workplace modifications can improve employee productivity and job satisfaction.

«The Impact of Employer Attitudes on the Employment of People with Disabilities» (Graffam J et al.,2002) – the authors examine the impact of employers' attitudes on the employment of people with disabilities. They found that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities lead to lower employment rates and limited career opportunities. They also found that employers who treat people with disabilities positively are more likely to hire them and provide them with housing (Graffam J,2002). Dew, B. & Bullock, H.E., (2015) – The authors review disability and employment research to gain insight into best practices for integrating people with disabilities in the workplace. . They believe that the successful inclusion of people with disabilities requires commitment from top management, active recruitment and hiring practices, and accommodations tailored to individual needs . So are authors such as Bell, MP, and Harrison, D.A., (2011) – they explore the impact of diversity training in reducing disability discrimination in the workplace. They believe that diversity education can be effective in reducing negative attitudes towards people with disabilities and improving inclusive behavior. However, they also find that the impact of diversity education may be limited and that other interventions may be required to achieve meaningful change (Bell,2011).

«Workplace amenities for people with disabilities: a review and research agenda» (Hernandez et al., 2020) – authors review research on workplace accommodations for people with disabilities and present a research agenda for future research. They found that workplace accommodations can lead to increased productivity, job satisfaction, and retention of employees with disabilities. They also identify several areas for future research, including the impact of workplace accommodations on the promotion of people with disabilities and the role of technology in facilitating accommodations.

In their work, Salhazan Nasutsia and other authors from Malaysia emphasize that for the disabled, employment is of particular importance in their lives, but, unfortunately, many people still worsen their need. Some people mistakenly believe that people with disabilities do not need a job to improve their lives, just as the average person does. They collect that the allowances chosen for the disabled are sufficient to ensure a decent life (Salhazan Nasutsia, 2014).

Gurina, Moiseev, and Shurupova highlight a number of crucial concerns, such as the need for employers to make extra investments when employing individuals with disabilities. Moreover, certain disabled groups require customized workplaces to carry out their job duties. Nevertheless, the authors point out, based on expert opinions, that setting quotas for employment does not ensure job opportunities for all physically capable disabled individuals, but merely provides additional assurance for those who are deemed suitable for work according to their rehabilitation plan. It is worth stressing that employers create these quota-based job positions without much enthusiasm, as it is not financially beneficial for them (Gurina, 2019).

Many researchers state that reaching a certain level of education is of great importance when looking for a job. However, historically, many children and adults with disabilities have not been given high educational opportunities (WHO, 2011). According to the OECD (2017), people with disabilities generally have a lower level of education compared to those without disabilities in this area.

Scholars are attracted to the study of the work of persons with disabilities because of its importance and the wide range of problems it faces on a global scale. Some of these problems include discrimination against persons with disabilities, “mistrust” on the part of employers, the need for additional support

from the state in the form of controls and other measures. These problems are relevant for different countries.

The purpose of this article is to consider the issue of creating equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the labor market of the city of Almaty. The article will highlight the problems associated with the employment of people with disabilities in the city, as well as offer practical recommendations and solutions aimed at improving the situation and ensuring equal opportunities for all. Specifically, the article will cover the following topics:

An analysis of the barriers people with disabilities face when looking for a job in Almaty. The study of legislative and legal acts regulating the employment of people with disabilities in the city.

An overview of best practices used in other regions and countries to create equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the workplace.

Offer concrete solutions and recommendations that can help remove barriers and provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the Almaty labor market.

The purpose of the article is to inform a wide audience about the problems associated with the employment of people with disabilities in the city of Almaty, as well as to assist in creating more equal opportunities for all.

Methodology

The article is a research paper that uses a qualitative data analysis method. The authors of the article collected and analyzed data obtained from a survey of employers and people with disabilities in the city of Almaty in order to identify the reasons why people with disabilities experience difficulties in finding employment.

The methodology of the article includes the following steps:

Preparing and conducting a survey. A questionnaire was developed containing questions about the employment and work experience of people with disabilities, as well as employers' perceptions of the employment of people with disabilities. The survey was conducted in the city of Almaty, and both people with disabilities and employers took part in it.

Analysis of survey results. We analyzed the data obtained, identified the main reasons for the difficulties that people with disabilities face in finding employment, and proposed a number of measures that can help improve the situation in this area.

Formulation of recommendations. Based on the data obtained, the authors of the article formulated a number of recommendations for employers and politicians that can help create more opportunities for people with disabilities in the labor market in Almaty.

Article formatting. Finally, the authors prepared an article in which they described their research methods, the results of the survey, as well as proposals for improving the situation for people with disabilities in the labor market in Almaty.

Thus, the methodology of the article includes conducting a survey, analyzing the data obtained, formulating recommendations and designing the article.

Results and Discussion

Topics were identified to analyze participants' responses based on the questions contained in the interview protocol, the main research question, and working hypotheses. The answers received as a result of interviews and questionnaires of the study participants were analyzed.

A total of 56 people with disabilities were interviewed, of whom 3 had a first degree disability, 12 had a second degree disability, and 41 had a third degree disability (as shown in Figure 1), they were all of working age. The diversity of disability groups is an important factor to consider when analyzing employment levels by category and making policy recommendations. Among the participants, 20 people were born with a disability or acquired it at an early age, and the rest became disabled at a later age. This factor is important because it directly influences the level of education and acquired skills, which are crucial for employment (as shown in Figure 2).

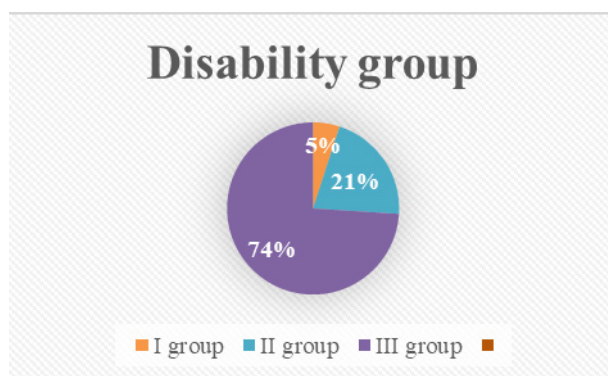


Figure 1 – Surveyed disabled people by groups
Note – compiled by the author based on a survey

The level of education plays a decisive role in employment opportunities. When asked what is your level of education, the respondents answered: 23 have higher education, 21 have secondary education (technical and vocational), 12 have secondary education.

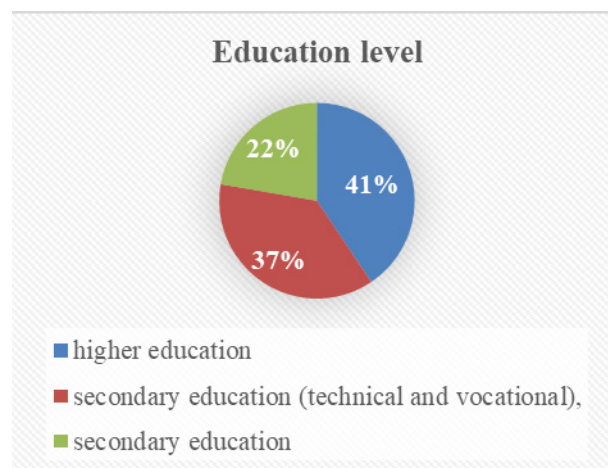


Figure 2 – Surveyed persons with disabilities by level of education
Note – compiled by the author based on a survey

To the question how did the detection of the disease and the establishment of the disability group affect your work activity? Have you had to change jobs? 75% of respondents answered that disability affected their work and are not currently working, 15% answered that disability did not affect and they work in the same place, 10% answered that they currently work but in a different profession. More than 90% answered that they are looking for a job or want to change their job.

As of July 1, 2022, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population of the Republic of Kazakhstan reported that the mean amount of state social disabilities was 56,974 tenge (132 dollar). By the standards of other countries, this is a very meager amount, while in Poland there are \$ 216, Germany \$ 832, UK 962 dollar, USA \$ 1177. It is not surprising that the question of what are the main motives for the search for more than 80% of respondents who answered that the main motive for the search for work is to provide their material needs (purchase of products, clothes) People with disabilities answered that it does not matter where to work (60%), and 15% would like to open their own business. Many said that they did not face problems with colleagues, and 22% replied that they

experienced problems with the employers of their previous work.

The employment center's available job opportunities may not always be appealing or appropriate for individuals with disabilities. However, there is a high demand for job openings that consider the specific needs of disabled individuals. According to the Center for Employment of the Akimat of the city of Almaty for 2022, only 80 people with disabilities are employed according to the quota system. The fact that there are incomplete quotas in enterprises is concerning, as it suggests that despite having access to guaranteed workplaces through quotas, disabled individuals may not be taking advantage of these opportunities due to reasons that are yet to be understood. In order to clarify the opinions of employers about problems and prospects, an interview with 35 organizations for which a quota of jobs for the employment of disabled people was installed were held with 35 organizations. The main question was what problems they face in working with people with disabilities and how they solve them. The generalized conclusion drawn from the analysis of the data is that employers generally have a positive attitude towards people with disabilities and understand the need to address problems in this area. When asked what help you expect from the state when hiring an employee with disabilities, the answers were such as helping the type of subsidizing salaries and in the search for specialists. All respondents expressed a common opinion about the quota policy that the state is trying to shift the responsibility for social support for vulnerable groups to employers.

There are a number of reasons that reduce the social activity and competitiveness of people with disabilities in the labor market. Among these reasons, one can single out environmental barriers that impede movement and transportation to the place of work, as well as the inaccessibility or inconvenience of various social infrastructure facilities. In addition, persons with disabilities may lack the technical aids they need, which may also reduce their competitiveness in the labor market. One of the main problems that people with disabilities face is higher living expenses compared to non-disabled people. This creates difficulties in paying for vocational training and additional costs associated with employment. As a result, people with disabilities may be excluded from social

recognition and educational opportunities due to their low socioeconomic status, problems finding work, and dependence on the client's social status.

Conclusion

One of the most assignments of the state is the wide inclusion of individuals with incapacities in labor movement, as this permits realizing the potential of attracting the populace and employing a substantial financial impact. Usually too expanded resilience to the social environment of the populace. It is imperative to note that people with inabilities are imaginative and beneficial laborers, given they are given with such openings. Physical incapacity ought to not be at hazard for work, and thus it is imperative that managers make uncommon employments for the crippled, which have more prominent imagination and concentration. To illuminate the issue of work of debilitated individuals, it is proposed to center on the taking after fundamental zones:

- Compilation of a enroll of unemployed impaired individuals and guardians raising debilitated children in each city and locale;
- Improvement of motivation measures for managers pointed at expanding the business of people with incapacities, such as a adaptable framework of assess benefits;
- Improvement of territorial laws and focused on programs that control the work of government offices for the work of individuals with incapacities;
- Making strides the framework of standards and work reservations, counting the creation of uncommon occupations for the debilitated;
- Improvement of social business enterprise pointed at including crippled individuals in labor exercises, both employees and business people;
- Extension of preparing and advanced preparing programs for people with inabilities;
- Taking under consideration the truth that bosses have plentiful openings to form uncommon employments and apply motivating force frameworks, it is vital to alter the existing component for controlling shares and saving occupations for individuals with incapacities;
- It is fundamental to utilize the mental potential of people with inabilities themselves to create imaginative arrangements to the issue of their work, counting recognizing and tending to the root causes of this issue.

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