



June 14, 2012

Members of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

In 2009, President Obama signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the first treaty to address disability rights globally. The CRPD ensures that people with disabilities everywhere enjoy the same rights as everyone else, enabling them to live full, independent, and productive lives. As of today, 110 countries have ratified the CRPD and 153 countries have signed it.

The values of equality and dignity encompassed in the CRPD are American values that know no party line. A bipartisan group of 7 senators has expressed support for the CRPD: Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL), Christopher Coons (D-DE), Tom Udall (D-NM), John McCain (R-AZ), Jerry Moran (R-KS), John Barrasso (R-WY), and Jerry Moran (R-KS). Over 165 disability organizations and 21 veterans service organizations support ratification of the CRPD. The disability community is pleased that the CRPD has been transmitted to the Senate and received with bipartisan support, and we urge you to call for a hearing on the CRPD in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee *this month*.

By ratifying the Convention, not only will the U.S. be able to highlight its position as a global leader on disability rights, it will also improve accessibility for U.S. citizens who travel and work outside America's borders, and create opportunity for U.S. businesses abroad that produce accessible goods. This presents an important opportunity for Senators to work together across party lines. In addition, moving the CRPD in this Congress is vital so that the U.S. may participate in the September elections for the CRPD Committee. This opportunity will not arise again for two years.

AAPD thanks you for your support and urges you to hold a hearing right away so that the U.S. can affirm its dedication to the rights and dignity of people with disabilities around the world.

Sincerely,

Mark Perriello
President & CEO