



American  
Public Health  
Association

800 I Street, N.W. • Washington, DC 20001-3710  
Phone: (202) 777-APHA • Fax: (202) 777-2534  
www.apha.org • comments@apha.org

---

*Protect, Prevent, Live Well*

October 19, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid  
U.S. Senate  
U.S Capitol Building, Room S-221  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
U.S. Senate  
U.S Capitol Building, Room S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid and McConnell,

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, I write in support of the United States' ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In March 2009, APHA sent a letter to Secretary Clinton in support of the U.S. signing and ratifying the CRPD. Later in 2009, President Obama signed this important human rights treaty and more recently, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing in which strong bipartisan support was expressed for its ratification. We now request the U.S. Senate to expeditiously support the ratification of the treaty.

Currently, 154 nations and regional integration organizations have signed and 124 have ratified the convention, reflecting a commitment to promote, protect and ensure the rights of people with disabilities. U.S. ratification of the CRPD is consistent with our nation's commitment to fully implement and enforce U.S. disability laws and ensure that children and adults with disabilities receive the health care, education, transportation and employment opportunities vital to participate fully in all aspects of life.

The World Report on Disability estimates that there are one billion people worldwide with disabilities, and projects that this number will continue to grow due to the increasing prevalence of HIV/AIDS and non-communicable chronic diseases, the aging of the world's population, more effective lifesaving measures of infants and mothers, and increasing numbers of countries in conflict. It is critical for the U.S. to move forward with ratifying the treaty to ensure that all people may pursue inclusive, healthy and productive lives that contribute to our global wellbeing and economies.

We urge you to support the ratification of the CRPD and signal to the world that the U.S. continues to serve as a leader on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, FACEP (E)  
Executive Director