

June 26, 2012

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators,

As the legacy organization of the 1996 Paralympic Games held in Atlanta, Georgia, BlazeSports America writes an open letter to the United States Senate today to respectfully request your support for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) – a treaty that will have a significant positive impact on improving access for Americans with disabilities who live, work, study, or travel both at home and abroad, including veterans.

BlazeSports America's mission is to empower children and adults with physical disabilities worldwide through sport, health enhancement, and the promotion of universal human rights. We have always understood the positive impact sports can have, from promoting life-long health and personal empowerment to providing successful futures for young people with disabilities. For this reason, we have been a strong supporter of the CRPD – and Article 30 *Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport*, in particular. Sports and recreation activities are often unavailable to people with disabilities particularly in developing countries where the majority of people with disabilities live. This treaty will significantly advance the work of our organization and others that are committed to raising awareness about the importance and value of physical activity for individuals with disabilities.

We understand that Senator Kerry has indicated a willingness to schedule a hearing on the CRPD in July. We are also aware that this hearing will only be set if the treaty has the support of a coalition of Members who understand the importance and significance of this treaty. We applaud the Senate for moving toward ratification, and we thank Senators McCain, Moran, Barrasso, Durbin, Harkin, Coons and Udall for their leadership on this treaty. We hope you will join with them and more than 20 Veterans groups and 165 disability organizations who agree that ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is critical to maintaining our leadership role and to eliminating disability discrimination throughout the world. The CRPD costs the US no additional funds and the proposed RUD package ensures that no changes in Federal or state law will be required.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration of this treaty. I look forward to hearing whether you will be able to support its ratification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ann Cody".

Ann Cody
Director of Policy and Global Outreach