



July 19, 2012

The Honorable John Kerry
Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225
(Transmitted via email to: Andrew_keller@foreign.senate.gov)

Dear Senator Kerry:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), I am writing this letter to thank you for your strong support of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Established in 1880, NAD is the nation's premier civil rights organization of, by and for deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the United States.

The NAD seeks for the United States to adopt the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which recognizes sign language and deaf culture as human rights. If the CRPD is not adopted in our country, the United States will be excluded from the International Committee formed to enforce the requirements of the CRPD throughout the world. If the CRPD is ratified in the U.S., the U.S. will be able to join the global community in efforts to promote, protect, and ensure full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities holds promise as a means to achieve full equality in education, medical care, legal representation, employment, and many other areas for people with disabilities throughout the world. The CRPD follows other UN Conventions in that it recognizes the importance of preserving and promoting the language and culture of minority people. The CRPD is unique in that it is the first Convention, which includes deaf people as one such minority.

The NAD respectfully asks that you remain in support of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and request your colleagues to vote in favor of the treaty.

Sincerely,

Christopher D. Wagner
President