



Rabbi David Saperstein
Director and Counsel

Mark J. Pelavin
Associate Director

Jennifer Brodkey Kaufman
Chair, Commission on Social
Action of Reform Judaism

Members of the United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 30, 2012

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the Union for Reform Judaism, whose more than 900 congregations across North America encompass 1.5 million Reform Jews, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, whose membership includes over 1800 Reform rabbis, I urge you to support the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Convention represents an international effort to bring the world closer to achieving the goals of equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities, just as our own Americans with Disabilities Act has sought to do. What's more, this Convention will ease the way for Americans with disabilities who work or travel abroad, such as veterans with disabilities, or military family members with disabilities, to access the same protections abroad as they enjoy in America.

U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will require no new legislation, nor will it incur any new costs. Indeed, much of the treaty is grounded in American laws already on the books. All of these issues, and others, have been well explored in a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on July 12th, who then overwhelmingly passed the treaty in a bipartisan vote last week.

The Reform Movement has long supported the rights of people with disabilities, for as we read in Leviticus 19:14, "You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind." This teaching inspires us to be proactive in lowering barriers placed by society, whether intended or not, before people with disabilities. Only by doing this can we ensure that people with disabilities around the world are included as full members of society.

We know you share our commitment to the well-being of people with disabilities the world over. We call upon you and your Senate colleagues to act quickly to ratify the treaty this month, guaranteeing the rights and dignities of people with disabilities in our nation and around the world.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Rabbi David Saperstein in blue ink.

Rabbi David Saperstein
Director, Religious Action Center

Handwritten signature of Rabbi Lynne Landsberg in blue ink.

Rabbi Lynne Landsberg
Senior Adviser on Disability Issues, Religious Action Center

Arthur and Sara Jo Kobacker
Building
2027 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
at Kivie Kaplan Way

202.387.2800
Fax: 202.667.9070
E-mail: rac@urj.org
Visit our website at www.rac.org

The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the Jewish community and serving as its advocate in Washington, D.C.