



June 25, 2012

The Honorable John Kerry, Chairman  
The Honorable Richard Lugar, Ranking Member  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

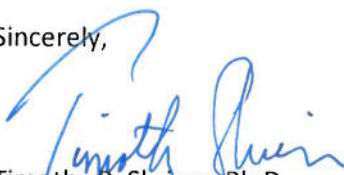
Dear Senators Kerry and Lugar:

I write to urge you to bring before the Senate the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)*, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006, signed by the United States of America on June 30, 2009, and transmitted to the Senate for ratification on May 17, 2012. The Convention establishes international standards regarding the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities and creates a common basis for greater civic and political participation and self-sufficiency. The Convention reflects core American values and core Special Olympics values to the dignity of the individual, equal and fair access to justice, access to health care, and the chance to participate fully in the life of the community and the country.

The CRPD seeks the same goals the United States had in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) twenty-two years ago: to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration in all aspects of society. Our nation's leadership in enacting the ADA served as a beacon of hope to people around the world and offered a strategy other nations could emulate. By signing the CRPD, the United States reaffirmed its leadership position in establishing and protecting the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities. By providing positive advice and consent for ratification, the Senate will underscore and ensure our global leadership in disability rights, and more importantly, advance the needs and gifts of hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

The United States has an important role to play in contributing to the realization of global human rights and we are uniquely fortunate and well positioned in our leadership on disability rights to ratify this Convention.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D.  
Chairman & CEO