



*For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities*

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June 27, 2012

Honorable John F. Kerry, Committee Chair
Honorable Richard G. Lugar, Ranking Member
Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Senators Kerry and Lugar:

The Arc urges the Senate to quickly consider and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The CRPD shares the goals of existing disability laws in our country: independence, inclusion, and integration into all aspects of society.

The Arc is the nation's oldest and largest nonprofit organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), promoting and protecting their human rights and actively supporting their full inclusion in the community throughout their lifetimes. The Arc's 705 state and local chapters, in 49 states and the District of Columbia, serve more than 1.5 million people with I/DD and immediate family members.

The CRPD establishes international standards regarding the rights and freedoms of people with disabilities, and creates a common basis for greater civic and political participation, self-sufficiency, and independent living. The Convention reflects core American values such as the dignity of the individual, access to justice, the importance of family decision-making, and access to appropriate health care. The Convention is consistent with the ADA, IDEA, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and numerous other U.S. laws.

The treaty package submitted by the Administration including the reservations, understandings, and declarations allow the United States to meet the obligations of the treaty while remaining consistent with U.S. domestic law.

The United States is a world leader in ensuring the human rights of individuals with disabilities. We believe the ratification of the CRPD will allow the United States to continue in our global leadership in this area, and therefore urge the Senate to quickly consider and ratify the CRPD.

Sincerely,

Peter V. Berns
CEO

Achieve with us.