



UNITED STATES  
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE  
1100 H Street, NW  
Suite 600  
Washington, DC 20005

July 9, 2012

Dear Senators:

On May 17, 2012 the Senate received a treaty package for their advice and consent to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). U.S. ratification of the CRPD will improve access for Americans with disabilities who live, work, or travel abroad, including our Wounded Warrior veterans, and Paralympic Team USA and U.S. National Paralympic team athletes who travel and compete internationally. The CRPD helps level the playing field for U.S. corporations by requiring businesses abroad to create policies on accessibility that meet ADA standards.

Similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the principles of the CRPD include equality, non-discrimination, inclusion in society, accessibility, and respect for inherent dignity. Twenty two years ago on July 26<sup>th</sup>, President George H.W. Bush signed the ADA, calling for the "walls of discrimination to come tumbling down." Since that time, the ADA has been model legislation for ending discriminatory practices throughout the world and a key inspiration for the CRPD.

One hundred and fourteen nations have ratified the CRPD, including important allies of the U.S. The treaty reflects core American values such as the dignity of the individual, access to justice, respect for the home and family, and the right to education. The CRPD is consistent with not only the ADA, but also with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and numerous other U.S. laws.

The CRPD seeks to ensure that countries across the globe provide people with disabilities the same rights as everyone else in order to live full, satisfying and productive lives. To this end, the CRPD will create greater access for Americans serving, working, traveling, studying, and competing abroad. The treaty package submitted to the Senate this May includes reservations, understandings, and a declaration that allow the United States to meet the obligations of the treaty without requiring any costs or changes in law.

The ratification of the CRPD will foster the U.S.'s continued global leadership on disability rights, providing the U.S. an opportunity to participate in substantive policy discussions in an international forum to effect the elimination of disability discrimination worldwide. We therefore urge the Senate to continue the bipartisan tradition of supporting the disability community by uniting in support of ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Desiree Filippone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Desiree Filippone  
Managing Director, Government Relations