

United States International Council on Disabilities

July 12, 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

RE: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Dear Senators Kerry and Lugar:

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). We the undersigned ask for your support for U.S. ratification of the CRPD. 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 26th, 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 sixteen 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, and studying 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.

We, the undersigned, are committed to our country’s leadership in promoting the rights and dignity of all people with disabilities. We believe the ratification of the CRPD will allow the U.S. to continue in our global leadership on disability rights. 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.

130 organizations join this letter including:

American Association of People with Disabilities ▪ The Association of University Centers on Disabilities ▪ The Association on Higher Education & Disability ▪ Council for Exceptional Children ▪ Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund ▪ Disability Rights International ▪ Little People of America ▪ National Association of the Deaf ▪ National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities ▪ National Council on Independent Living ▪ National Multiple Sclerosis Society ▪ The Arc ▪ USICD ▪ United Spinal Association

Full list of supporting organizations:

1. Ability Chicago
2. Access, Inc.
3. Access Living
4. ADAPT Delaware
5. Alliance Center for Independence
6. American Association of People with Disabilities
7. American Association on Health and Disability
8. American Civil Liberties Union
9. Anti-Defamation League
10. Arc Northland
11. ARC of Lucas county
12. Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living
13. Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
14. Association on Higher Education & Disability
15. Attention Deficit Disorder Association
16. Bay Cove Human Services, Inc
17. BlazeSports America
18. BlueLaw International
19. Boston Center for Independent Living
20. Bridge II Sports
21. Bridgewell
22. California State Council on Developmental Disabilities
23. Check and Connect Program - Central Lakes College
24. Council for Exceptional Children
25. DAWN Center for Independent Living
26. DC Queer Caucus
27. Delaware Family Voices
28. Developmental Disabilities Institute, Wayne State University
29. Disability Law Center
30. disABILITY Resource Center
31. Disability Rights Advocacy Fund
32. Disability Rights International
33. Disability Rights Legal Center
34. disAbility Solutions for Independent Living
35. Disabled Rights Action Committee
36. Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
37. Disabled Sports USA
38. Down Syndrome Association of Snohomish County
39. Dynamic Independence
40. ED101, Inc.
41. Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities International, Inc
42. Fearless Nation PTSD Support
43. Federal Employees with Disabilities (FEDs)
44. FESTAC-USA (Festival of African Arts and Culture)
45. FHI n360
46. Fiesta Christian foundation Inc
47. Foundations For Change, PC
48. Four Freedoms Forum
49. Friedman Place

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50. GlobalPartnersUnited
51. GREATER HAVERHILL NEWBURYPORT
52. Human Rights Watch
53. Independent Living Center of the North Shore & Cape Ann
54. Institute for Human Centered Design
55. Institute Human Centered Design
56. International Ventilator Users Network
57. Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
58. Johnson County Board of Services
59. Just Advocacy of Mississippi
60. L.E.A.N. On Us
61. Little People of America
62. Living Independence For Everyone (LIFE) of Mississippi
63. Long Island Center for Independent Living, Inc. (LICIL)
64. Maryland Disability Law Center
65. Massachusetts Families Organizing for Change
66. Medicol Inc.
67. MindFreedom International
68. Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competence, Inc.
69. National Association of the Deaf
70. National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
71. National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
72. National Association of the Deaf
73. National Center for Environmental Health Strategies
74. National Council on Independent Living
75. National MS Society - Ohio Chapters
76. National Multiple Sclerosis Society
77. National Multiple Sclerosis Society, National Capital Chapter
78. New York State Independent Living Council
79. Next Step
80. Noble County ARC, Inc.
81. Northeast Arc
82. Not Dead Yet
83. Ohio Valley Goodwill Industries
84. Optimal Beginnings, LLC
85. Osteogenesis Imperfecta Foundation
86. PA Mental Health Consumers' Association
87. Paralyzed Veterans of America
88. Parent to Parent USA
89. Peppermint Ridge
90. Perkins
91. PhilanthropyNow
92. Pineda Foundation for Youth
93. PXE International
94. REACH Resource Centers On Independent Living
95. Rehabilitation International
96. RESNA
97. Rose F. Kennedy University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
98. Self Advocacy Council of Northern Illinois
99. Statewide Independent Living Council
100. Tennessee Disability Coalition
101. The Arc
102. The Arc - Jefferson, Clear Creek & Gilpin Counties

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103. The Arc Arapahoe & Douglas
104. The Arc California
105. The Arc Cedar Valley
106. The Arc of Bristol County
107. The Arc of Colorado
108. The Arc of Dickinson
109. The Arc of Fort Bend County
110. The Arc of Greater Pittsburgh
111. The Arc of Iowa
112. The Arc of Massachusetts
113. The Arc of Northern Virginia
114. The Arc of Opportunity in North Central Massachusetts
115. The Arc of the US
116. The Arc of Toombs County
117. The Center for Rights of Parents with Disabilities
118. The Jewish Federations of North America
119. The Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
120. The National Council on Independent Living
121. Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
122. topeka independent living resource center
123. Tri Count4y ILC
124. United Spinal Association
125. United States International Council on Disabilities
126. Vermont Center for Independent Living
127. Women's Refugee Commission
128. WORK, Inc
129. World Institute on Disability
130. Wyoming Institute for Disabilities