

Re: Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Dear Senator:

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 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, 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.

Sincerely,