

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



AAP Headquarters

141 Northwest Point Blvd
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007-1019
Phone: 847/434-4000
Fax: 847/434-8000
E-mail: kidsdocs@aap.org
www.aap.org

Reply to

Department of Federal Affairs

Homer Building, Suite 400 N
601 13th St NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: 202/347-8600
Fax: 202/393-6137
E-mail: kids1st@aap.org

Executive Committee

President

Thomas K. McInerney, MD, FAAP

President-Elect

James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP

Immediate Past President

Robert W. Block, MD, FAAP

Executive Director/CEO

Errol R. Alden, MD, FAAP

Board of Directors

District I

Carole E. Allen, MD, FAAP
Arlington, MA

District II

Danielle Laraqe, MD, FAAP
Brooklyn, NY

District III

David I. Bromberg, MD, FAAP
Frederick, MD

District IV

Francis E. Rushton, Jr, MD, FAAP
Beaufort, SC

District V

Marilyn J. Bull, MD, FAAP
Indianapolis, IN

District VI

Pamela K. Shaw, MD, FAAP
Kansas City, KS

District VII

Kenneth E. Matthews, MD, FAAP
College Station, TX

District VIII

Kyle Yasuda, MD, FAAP
Seattle, WA

District IX

Stuart A. Cohen, MD, MPH, FAAP
San Diego, CA

District X

Sara H. Goza, MD, FAAP
Fayetteville, GA

October 2, 2013

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman, Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

The Honorable Bob Corker
Ranking Member, Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
446 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6225

Dear Senators Menendez and Corker:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), a non-profit professional organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, I am writing to strongly urge the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to redouble its efforts to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

AAP is deeply committed to improving the health and well-being of the world's children, especially for children with disabilities. It is estimated that 10 percent of the world's children—or approximately 200 million out of a global population of about 2 billion¹—were born with disabilities or became disabled during childhood. Unfortunately, children with disabilities are often times not valued the same as other children and are marginalized in many parts of the world. In addition, children with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty², are disproportionately vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse³, and are often times denied education⁴. Worse, mortality for children with disabilities may be as high as 80 percent in countries where under-five mortality has been reduced to under 20 percent.⁵ For the reason listed above, the CRPD is of critical importance to children around the world.

The United States of America has been a world leader in championing the rights of people with disabilities, highlighted by the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) over 21 years ago. America's children have benefited greatly from ADA, as well as other landmark legislation like the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and it is time to encourage these advances in disability rights to children throughout the world.

Like the concepts behind ADA and IDEA, the CRPD promotes individual dignity, equal opportunity, accessibility, and full inclusion and participation in society for all people with disabilities. In many ways the CRPD was directly inspired by and modeled after the ADA. As such, it is imperative that America reaffirm its commitment to human rights and dignity for all by ratifying the CRPD. Failure to do so would signal a retreat from our leadership on this issue and will diminish our capacity to lend our expertise as more countries develop their own disability rights laws.

Although we were greatly disappointed that the Senate fell five votes short of ratifying the CRPD last December, we are hopeful that the Senate can take up the treaty again in the 113th Congress and ratify it quickly. As the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we urge you to hold hearings on the treaty and continue the process of having the full Senate consider the CRPD.

AAP is joined by more than 650 organizations from the medical, disability, faith, business and veterans' community that support the United States ratification of the CRPD. It is crucial that America ratify the treaty so that we can continue to effectively work to promote human rights and dignity for children with disabilities throughout the world. We thank you for your consideration and hope we can count on your support for ratification of the treaty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas K. McInerney".

Thomas K. McInerney, MD, FAAP
President

TKM/pmj

¹ UN Disability Fact Sheet, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UN, New York, 2006.

² *Disability, Poverty and Development*, DFID, London, 2000.

³ Violence against Disabled Children, UN Secretary General's Report on Violence against Children Thematic Group on Violence against Disabled Children: Findings and Recommendations, convened by UNICEF at the United Nations, New York, July 28, 2005.

⁴ *Disability, Poverty and Development*, DFID, London, 2000.

⁵ Thomas P, *Disability, Poverty and the Millennium Development Goals*, DFID, June 2005.