



American Council of the Blind

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October 30, 2013

The Honorable {First and Last name of Senator}
US Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator _____:

The American Council of the Blind (ACB) is the largest consumer-based organization of blind and visually impaired citizens advocating for the rights of blind Americans. Comprised of more than 70 affiliates across the United States, the organization is dedicated to making it possible for blind and visually impaired people to participate fully in all aspects of American society.

Similar to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the principles of the Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) include equality, non-discrimination, inclusion in society, accessibility, and respect for inherent dignity. Twenty three years ago, 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.

Over 100 nations have now 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 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 allow the U.S. to continue in our global leadership on disability rights. The American Council of the Blind urges 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,

Kim Charlson
President