



**STATE OF HAWAII**  
STATE COUNCIL  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
919 ALA MOANA BOULEVARD, ROOM 113  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814  
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543  
November 6, 2013

The Honorable Robert Menendez, Chairman,  
and Members  
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
444 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-6225

Dear Senator Menendez and Members of the Committee:

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Disability Treaty was inspired by the leadership of the United States and is the first treaty to address disability rights. The purpose of the Convention is to "promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity."

This is consistent with the mission, vision, and principles of the State Council on Developmental Disabilities "to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to control their own destiny and determine the quality of life they desire. People with disabilities are treated equally and enjoy fundamental human rights, among them life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. They have choices about where they live, work and play, and they receive the supports they need to do so."

The Council supports that the Convention and the treaty package before the U.S. Senate:

- 1) Recognizes and protects the rights of individuals with disabilities as reflected in our current American with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- 2) Supports the United States as a global movement leader of disability rights.
- 3) Requires no changes in United States laws and recognizes existing United States laws of equal access for persons with disabilities.
- 4) Ensures the rights of an individual with disability on an equal basis with others.
- 5) Recognizes the importance for individuals with disabilities of their autonomy, independence, and freedom to make their own choices.
- 6) Supports the rights of children with disabilities.

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- 7) Supports the role of the family and parental rights, including the right to make decisions for their children as reflected in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act and maintains that the “best interest of the child” will be interpreted according to United States law.
- 8) Recognizes and ensures that the obligations of the United States under the treaty do not limit or change areas that are under state and local government authority.
- 9) Recognizes that the United States maintains and follows its accessibility standards as mandated by the Constitution and the current laws, including ADA and the Fair Housing Amendments Acts.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter **strongly supporting** the Disability Treaty.

Sincerely,

  
Waynette K.Y. Cabral, MSW  
Executive Administrator

  
J. Curtis Tyler III  
Chair