



Institute on Disabilities

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Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee:

The Institute on Disabilities is writing to support ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Institute on Disabilities at Temple University is Pennsylvania's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) Education, Research, and Service, established under the federal Developmental Disabilities Act.

The CRPD is a non-discrimination treaty seeking to achieve the same goals as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other existing disability laws in United States: to empower individuals with disabilities to achieve economic self-sufficiency, independent living, inclusion and integration into all aspects of society. The CRPD is important to all people with disabilities, including our veterans and service members with disabilities, as it embodies equal treatment and non-discrimination in access to rehabilitation, employment and educational opportunities.

By ratifying the CRPD, the United States will continue to be a leader in setting the standards for ensuring the human rights of individuals with disabilities, as we have under the ADA, IDEA, etc. The Convention reflects core American values such as the dignity of the individual, access to justice, the importance of family decision-making and access to appropriate healthcare.

Through these mechanisms, the United States can provide and influence guidance on the implementation of the treaty around the world and lend our expertise as more countries develop their own disability rights laws. Such leadership will not only further our nation's vision for global human rights, but assist the millions of people with disabilities from the United States such as military veterans, students, scientists, tourists and business leaders, and their families who live, do business, and travel abroad. American citizens with disabilities should have the same opportunity to benefit from a world economy that is fully accessible to all people.

The Institute on Disabilities is committed to US leadership on behalf of the 1 billion people with disabilities worldwide. We believe swift US ratification of the CRPD in a bipartisan fashion is in this country's best interest and ask you for your support and leadership on this issue.

Please contact us with additional questions.

Sincerely,

Celia S. Feinstein
Co-Executive Director

Amy S. Goldman
Co-Executive Director