

November 18, 2013

The Honorable Mark Warner
475 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510



Dear Senator Warner,

Lutheran Family Services of Virginia is writing to support ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). My agency is committed to the humane and moral treatment of people with disabilities around the world. Modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the CRPD supports the American ideal of full inclusion for people with disabilities in society and their right to live a life of independence and dignity.

Since 1980 Lutheran Family Services has served students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and since 2011 we have had programs that serve adults with disabilities. Currently over 150 students attend our Minnick Schools in Wise, Wytheville, Roanoke and Harrisonburg VA and over 275 adults are served through a variety of programs in Danville, Roanoke, Bedford, Charlottesville, Lynchburg and the Tidewater area.

Lutheran Family Services of Virginia is also an active member of Lutheran Services in America Disability Network (LSA-DN). LSA-DN is a nationwide association of Lutheran social ministry organizations, faith-based disability service providers and Lutheran professionals supporting the needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and related conditions (I/DD). LSA-DN includes 22 organizational members that provide support to more than 23,000 individuals in 33 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands, generating over \$1.25 billion in income during 2012.

As a network, LSA-DN continues to demonstrate our dedication to supporting individuals with I/DD, in the U.S. and abroad, through our own ongoing international outreach. Through IMPACT, Bethesda Lutheran Communities and Mosaic have partnered with Bethpage Great Britain, v. Bodelschwingsche Anstalten Bethel, Nord-Norges Diakonistiftelse and Motivation Romania to promote human rights, recognition and social inclusion of people with disabilities within their local communities. Furthermore, LSA-DN members have established numerous international partnerships, targeting countries and societies in which there is the greatest chance to make a positive impact on the supports and services for people with I/DD. Current locations of outreach include:

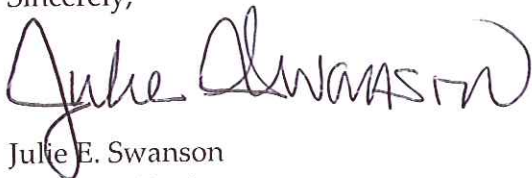
- Latin America – Dominican Republic, Brazil, Argentina
- Europe – Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, Western Russia
- Africa – Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania
- Asia – Kazakhstan, Cambodia, China, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore

By ratifying the CRPD, the U.S. will continue to be a leader in setting the standards for ensuring the human rights of individuals with disabilities. As a faith-based service provider, Lutheran Family Services believes that the CRPD reflects the core Biblical and American values of individual dignity, access to justice and the importance of family decision-making.

LFSVA is committed to U.S. leadership on behalf of the one billion people with disabilities worldwide. We believe that swift U.S. ratification of the CRPD in a bipartisan fashion is in the country's best interest and consistent with our values. We ask for your support and leadership on this issue.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at 540-562-8461.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Swanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J".

Julie E. Swanson
President/CEO

cc: Sarah L. Meek, MSW | Director of Public Policy & Advocacy