

October 31, 2013

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bob Corker
United States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker:

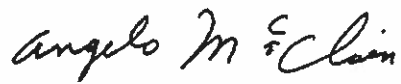
We are writing on behalf of National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and our 135,000 members and 55 Chapters in support of United States ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). We are pleased that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is holding hearings on CRPD and submit this letter of support for the hearing record.

The CRPD is a non-discrimination treaty which seeks to ensure that countries across the globe provide people with disabilities with the same rights as everyone else, so that they can live full, satisfying and productive lives. This global treaty was inspired by and embodies the bedrock American ideals that form the basis of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). These principles, so important to us as a civil and human rights organization devoted to protecting and advancing the rights of (add in appropriate constituency), include non-discrimination, equality, inclusion in society, accessibility and respect for the inherent dignity of all persons, including persons with disabilities.

According to the latest census data, 18.7 percent of all Americans have some type of disability. People of color experience disability at the following rates: According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in the 2011 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, American Indians/Alaskan Natives experience the highest rate of disability at 16.3%; Black or African American at 13.9%; White alone (not Hispanic or Latino) at 13.2%; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone at 8.8%; Hispanic or Latino (of any race) at 8.4%; and Asian alone at 6.4%. In addition, females experience a rate of disability at 12.4% and males at 11.9%. Furthermore, persons 65 years or older experience the highest rate of disability at 36.6%; persons 18 to 64 years at 10.2%; persons 5 to 17 years at 5.2%; and persons under 5 years at 0.8%.

The CRPD will benefit millions of individuals with disabilities around the world. U.S. ratification will also benefit Americans, particularly those veterans, business leaders, scientists, students and other disabled Americans who seek to live, work or travel abroad. NASW is committed to ensuring that our country maintains its leadership role in promoting the rights and dignity of all people with disabilities. We have a lot of experience—through the ADA, our technology and our creative know-how—to share with the rest of the world. But most importantly, by ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities we will demonstrate our respect to those Americans disabled through war and conflict and other incidents and can stand with the rest of the world in advancing the civil and human rights of disabled people around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Angelo M. McClain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and "M".

Angelo McClain, PhD, LICSW
Chief Executive Officer