



Emily Spitzer
Executive Director

November 4, 2013

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Suzi Richards
U.S. International Council on Disabilities
1012 14th St. NW, Suite 105
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Ms. Richards:

The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) is writing in support of ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The National Health Law Program (NHeLP) is a public interest law firm working to advance access to quality health care and protect the legal rights of low-income and underserved people. NHeLP provides technical support to direct legal services programs, community-based organizations, the private bar, providers and individuals who work to preserve a health care safety net for the millions of uninsured or underinsured low-income people.

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.

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

If you have additional questions, please contact Mara Youdelman, Managing Attorney (DC Office) at Youdelman@healthlaw.org or 202-289-7661.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Spitzer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Emily" and last name "Spitzer" clearly distinguishable.

Emily Spitzer
Executive Director