



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

October 29, 2013

Honorable Robert Menendez
Chair
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
444 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Bob Corker
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
425 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Corker:

The National Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Society urges you to support ratification of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Ratification of this treaty is a priority for the National MS Society, as well as the Multiple Sclerosis International Federation (MSIF) of which we are a member, along with more than 80 other MS organizations from around the world.

More than 20 years ago, the U.S. provided world leadership when it passed groundbreaking legislation, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA has made America more accessible for millions of Americans and served as the inspiration for the CRPD. The CRPD aims to enhance the rights of persons with disabilities by asserting that persons with disabilities have the same rights as persons without disabilities. Ratification of the CRPD will benefit U.S. business interests, support global accessibility, and allow the U.S. to continue its leadership in an area of U.S. expertise.

The Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Business Leadership Network, and the Information Technology Industry Council each support the ratification of the CRPD. The CRPD will benefit American businesses by opening additional markets for American made goods which will spur new economic growth. Additionally, the CRPD will help create a level playing field between U.S. businesses that are ADA compliant and businesses in other countries that currently do not have comparable workplace standards.

The CRPD will move to create a more accessible world. Americans with disabilities—including veterans—will have increased independence to continue to work, serve, study, live, or travel abroad. The CRPD will help reduce the barriers for Americans with disabilities by changing attitudes and perceptions around the world, much like has happened in America over the past generation.

After ratifying the CRPD, the U.S. will have the opportunity to participate in the



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CRPD Committee. This is a committee that was established through the CRPD and is responsible for providing non-binding advice and recommendations for countries that ratify the convention. Only after ratifying the treaty can the U.S., a leading international expert on disability rights and accessibility, participate in the Committee.

On behalf of those living with MS and other disabilities in the United States, we urge you to support ratification of the CRPD. Thank you for your consideration and if you or your staff has any questions, please contact our Vice President of Federal Government Relations, Ted Thompson, at 202-408-9484 or via email at ted.thompson@nmss.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Bari Talente'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Bari Talente
Executive Vice President, Advocacy

CC: Senate Committee on Foreign Relations