

INTERFAITH DISABILITY ADVOCACY COALITION

c/o AAPD • 2013 H Street, NW, 5th Floor • Washington, DC 20006

Members of the Foreign Relations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

June 19, 2012

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned members of the Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition (IDAC) and other religious and religiously-affiliated organizations, urge you as a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to hold hearings this month on the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Convention realizes an international effort to achieve global goals of economic self-sufficiency, equality of opportunity, full participation, and independent living for people with disabilities. These goals are enshrined in our own Americans with Disabilities Act, a model for the Convention. The Convention will enable Americans with disabilities working or traveling abroad, such as veterans or members of military families with disabilities, to access the same protections abroad as they enjoy in America.

No new legislation will be required by U.S. ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, nor does the Convention impose any new costs. In fact, as noted, much of the treaty is grounded in American laws already on the books.

We must move quickly to ratify the treaty. We urge you to hold hearings this month to build on the momentum created by the announcement of bipartisan support of Senators Durbin, McCain, Barrasso, Udall, Coons, and Moran. Ratifying the treaty during this Congress will enable the US to participate in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee. This advisory group is a forum for idea sharing related to disability policy, and represents a valuable opportunity for continued American leadership and influence on this issue. Only those countries that have ratified the Convention can serve on this committee, and American leadership in this arena is critical to the ultimate success of the treaty.

The American disability rights community has united behind ratification of the Convention. We know you stand with us in wanting to ensure full participation and access for people with disabilities the world over. We urge you and your Senate colleagues to hold hearings this month on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and move toward its ratification with all due speed.

Respectfully,

African Methodist Episcopal Church Connectional Health Commission

American Baptist Home Mission Societies

American Muslim Health Professionals

Association of Jewish Family & Children's Agencies
Disability Concerns, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Disability Concerns, Reformed Church in America
Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Disciples Justice Action Network
Hindu American Foundation
Islamic Society of North America
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
L'Arche USA
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness
Rabbinical Assembly
The Jewish Federations of North America
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
United Church of Christ, Justice Witness Ministries
United Methodist General Board of Church and Society
Women's Rabbinic Network