



## *Disability Treaty Fact Sheet*

### **BACKGROUND:**

In December 2012, the U.S. came close—really close—to ratifying the Disability Treaty. Five Senators who voted 'No' stood in the path of the 2/3 vote required to ratify the treaty that protects the rights of people with disabilities. This international disability treaty is a vital framework for creating legislation and policies around the world that embrace the rights and dignity of all people with disabilities. It was inspired by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which served as the model for the Treaty, and values independence and respect and the concept of reasonable accommodation.

### **CURRENT STATUS:**

On November 5, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held its first hearing on the Disability Treaty. The next hearing is scheduled for Thursday, November 21. There are currently 61 bipartisan Senators stating their support for the Treaty, including several strong Republican leaders (McCain, AZ; Barrasso, WY; Ayotte, NH; Kirk, IL; Murkowski, AK; Collins, ME). Ratification requires 2/3 of the Senate (67 votes in favor) to ratify the treaty.

### **TALKING POINTS:**

1. Ratification will reinforce America's global leadership, putting it in the strongest position to advance disability rights worldwide. Ratification is critical to maintaining a leadership role and eliminating disability discrimination throughout the world. The treaty gives the U.S. a legitimate role to export the model of the ADA to other countries.
2. More than 800 U.S. organizations, including disability groups, 20+ veterans' service organizations (most recently American Legion), businesses, and faith-based organizations have pledged their support to this treaty.
3. CRPD Ratification provides principles that will lead to more humane and moral treatment of people with disabilities worldwide. Without laws like the ADA abroad, millions of children and adults are housed in institutions without enrichment of a family life, community resources, or access to the most basic civil rights like a birth certificate or even a name. Until it ratifies the CRPD, the U.S. is a bystander on these critical matters.
4. The "Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations" (RUDs) added to the treaty package are carefully crafted to address all the issues raised by those with concerns. The CRPD has been reviewed by both Republican and Democratic Attorneys General and by past Counsel to Presidents. They confirm that it does not threaten the sovereignty of the U.S. nor does it require any new legislation to comply with the treaty.
5. This treaty is good for American business and for the world. It will allow us to bring our knowledge of making a society accessible to the whole world. Many accessible products are engineered, manufactured, or sold by U.S. corporations that can meet the new demands for the world's population of 1 billion people with disabilities.
6. Major veteran and military family organizations, representing every generation, support ratification of the CRPD. These groups recognize that our 5.5 million American veterans with disabilities, and the families of those currently serving, will have greater opportunities to work, study, and travel abroad as countries implement the CRPD with leadership from the U.S.