



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

October 14, 2014

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Labor, Health and Human Services and Education
Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Technology and Telecommunications Task Force, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for funding the Assistive Technology (AT) Act at \$38 million in the House's Democratic Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Labor, Health, and Human Services Appropriations bill. This increased funding allows the full range of supports intended to be provided for people with disabilities according to the current statute.

Fully funding the Assistive Technology Act allows every state and territory to receive the minimum grant outlined in the AT Act and directly supports the ability of the State AT Programs to provide the breadth of services authorized under the statute including device demonstration, short-term device loan, device reutilization state financing, training, and information and assistance activities. Given states will have increased funding, the additional dollars can be used to support any activities authorized to best meet the needs of people with disabilities in that state. Since many State AT Programs provide services through subcontractors at the local level using such organizations as Centers for Independent Living and Easter Seals agencies, the reach of this funding increase delves deep into the communities who serve this population.

This increase in funding will also allow Protection and Advocacy agencies through the Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT) program to increase their impact on the lives of children and adults with disabilities through additional advocacy work. The PAAT program ensures in every state and territory that

individuals with disabilities have access to the assistive technology they need to receive a high-quality education and obtain competitive, integrated employment. Current funding is used to provide information and referrals, offer individual and systemic advocacy services, and conduct trainings for children and adults with disabilities. Additional funding will allow the PAAT program to serve more eligible individuals, including returning veterans, and allow more individuals with a disability to live in their communities and be economically self-sufficient.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of more than 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration, and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Telecommunications and Technology Task Force focuses on ensuring national policy on matters of telecommunications and technology, including assistive technology, helps move society toward our ultimate goal of full inclusion of all people with a disability.

Thank you again for your efforts on behalf of Assistive Technology Act, which is so important to all Americans with disabilities. We look forward to working with you in the coming months as Congress works to finalize the FY 2015 budget. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the CCD Technology and Telecommunications Task Force Co-Chairs: Eric Buehlmann, eric.buehlmann@ndrn.org; Mark Richert, 4justice@concentric.net; Audrey Busch, audrey.busch@ataporg.org; Sara Rosta, sara.rosta@PPSV.com; or Michael Brogioli, mbrogioli@resna.org.

Sincerely,

Eric Buehlmann, National Disability Rights Network
Mark Richert, American Foundation for the Blind
Audrey Busch, Association for Assistive Technology Act Programs
Sara Rosta, Perkins
Michael Brogioli, Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America