Major Disability Organization Urges Senators to “Do the Right Thing” and Vote for International Disability Rights Treaty

SILVER SPRING, MD (November 20, 2013) — The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) strongly supports the United States’ ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Last year the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings that demonstrated strong bipartisan support for CRPD ratification and favorably reported the treaty out of committee. Unfortunately, the treaty fell five votes short of the super-majority required to pass the full Senate. AUCD urges the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to once again move the treaty forward and allow the U.S. to join the other 138 nations that have ratified this important human rights treaty.

By ratifying the CRPD, the U.S. has the ability to play a critical role in ensuring that all people with disabilities have access to health care, education, transportation and employment opportunities vital to fully participating in all aspects of life. This strategic action would benefit people with disabilities worldwide, their families and caregivers by contributing to equitable societal inclusion, human rights and economic growth. By ratifying the CRPD, the U.S. will have the opportunity to fully engage with other States Parties who have ratified the treaty to collaborate in the development and implementation of programs and policies to improve the lives of persons living with disabilities across the globe. American businesses, along with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, also support this treaty for the opportunity it gives the U.S. to set the standard for universal design in accessibility worldwide.

As Chairman Menendez stated recently, “The treaty’s principles are firmly based on American values. From the U.S. Constitution, the treaty borrows principles of equality and the protection of minorities. From the Declaration of Independence, it borrows the unalienable right to pursue happiness. And from the Americans with Disabilities Act and other landmark accessibility laws, the treaty borrows the concept of reasonable accommodation, so that those with disabilities are not barred from opportunities others take for granted. By ratifying this treaty, America will be advocating for the adoption of American values around the world.”

AUCD Executive Director Andy Imparato added, “Now is the time for the U.S. to join the ranks of the other nations who are committed to promoting, protecting and ensuring the rights of people with
disabilities at the global level. AUCD urges Senators to do the right thing by voting for the treaty and not succumbing to myths and fear mongering."

AUCD works nationally and internationally to ensure that individuals with disabilities all over the world are treated with dignity and respect. AUCD looks forward to working with the Committee, the full Senate, and partner organizations toward full ratification of the CRPD.

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), located in Silver Spring, MD, promotes and supports a national network of interdisciplinary centers on disabilities. The members of AUCD represent every U.S. state and territory. AUCD and its members work to advance policy and practice through research, education, leadership, and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families, and communities. For more information, visit AUCD’s website: www.aucd.org.

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