



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

**STATEMENT OF THE CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES
REGARDING THE US SUPREME COURT VACANCY**

March 15, 2016, Washington, DC – The Rights Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities strongly urges the Senate to hold a hearing and take action on the President’s nominee to fill the vacancy on the United States Supreme Court.

“It would be unusual and very troubling to leave the Court without full capacity for more than a year, until after the next president takes office,” stated Kim Musheno of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities and chair of the Consortium. “People with disabilities depend on a fully functioning U.S. Supreme Court to interpret and give effect to the important civil rights and other protections that Congress afforded them, including those in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and the Social Security Act which includes Medicaid long term services programs. These protections are crucial to maximizing independence and autonomy for people with disabilities and enabling them to be full and equal participants in society.”

“The Supreme Court has played a significant role in shaping how these crucial civil rights protections are interpreted, and enforced,” added Jennifer Mathis of the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, one of the Right’s Task Force co-chairs. “For example, in 1999—nine years after Congress passed the ADA with broad bipartisan support—the Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, which has paved the way for thousands of individuals with disabilities to leave institutions and live in their own homes and communities. In *Tennessee v. Lane*, the Court affirmed Congress’s power under the ADA to require access for people with disabilities to our justice system.”

The Supreme Court plays a critical role in resolving hard-fought battles to protect individuals with disabilities and ensure that they are afforded the same access and opportunities as people without disabilities. The uncertainty and risks associated with a U.S. Supreme Court that is not fully functional will harm people with disabilities and others who rely on the courts to protect their rights. We urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to hold hearings on any individual nominated by President Obama and allow a vote based on that nominee’s credentials. We expect both the President and the Senate to fulfill this critical constitutional duty.

CCD is a coalition of national disability organizations working for national public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults

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with disabilities in all aspects of society. For more information, visit the CCD website at www.c-c-d.org or contact the Rights Task Force Co-Chairs below:

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