**United States International Council on Disabilities/National Council on Disability Report: The 2013 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Education Forum**

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***“The [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities’] purpose lies squarely in the best traditions of our great country. The disabilities treaty is an international agreement that will help protect the rights of Americans with disabilities when they live, work, travel or study overseas. It is exactly like the Americans with Disabilities Act and what it does here at home. In both cases, the measures are about ensuring equality and dignity, but the disabilities treaty is about something more. It’s about American leadership. It’s about the affirmation of who we are as a nation and what we stand for in the eyes of the world.”***

***—Secretary of State, John Kerry***

***Executive Summary***

On September 17, 2013, the National Council on Disability (NCD) convened representatives of the disability and veteran communities in an Educational Forum on the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This three-hour program, facilitated in partnership with the U.S. International Council on Disabilities (USICD), a nonprofit, membership organization, was initiated to provide stakeholders information about this important international treaty and the United States process of treaty ratification. Nearly 100 people, from the Washington, DC area as well as from across the country, participated in the forum. A variety of speakers participated in the forum, including former U.S. Congressman Tony Coelho, key staff from NCD and other federal agencies, and leaders and experts from various disability, veteran, faith, and business organizations involved in promoting the CRPD treaty.

The content of this report of the forum proceedings has been developed from the transcript of the discussion, educational materials disseminated to the participants, and foundational treaty source documents as cited. The first of three sections of this report provides general background information.. This includes brief discussion of the history and content of the treaty and the process of monitoring treaty implementation via the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The second section, entitled “Consideration of U.S. Ratification of the CRPD” reviews the history of the effort to ratify the CRPD in 2012 and discusses some of the legal implications of the CRPD and its accompanying Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations (RUDs) from the U.S. administration. Next, “Voices for U.S. Ratification” contains a series of quotes delivered by speakers at the USICD/NCD CRPD Forum expressing their rationale for supporting U.S. ratification of the CRPD. Finally, the Appendices provide materials disseminated to the forum participants and other USICD materials on the CRPD. These include the agenda of the forum, biographies for the speakers, a handout on the CRPD, a handout countering myths about the CRPD, a handout on RUDs, international voices for the CRPD, and a report from the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities entitled *Abused and Neglected Abroad*.

***“We [at AT&T] believe that if we are going to meet our aspirational goals of hiring people with disabilities and providing equal opportunities, which AT&T is committed to and many other U.S. companies are, we need to be able to provide opportunities for those in business to travel, to learn and get a global perspective, because the reality is you work in a global marketplace. We also have to be able to take advantage of people who live in other countries who have these skill sets and expertise that we need to fill. There may not be a huge number of people with specific skill sets around technology that we need. We need to be able to hire those people as well.”***

—Susan Mazrui,   
 Director of Public Policy, AT&T Services, Inc.

***Background on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities***

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international treaty that was significantly inspired by U.S. leadership in recognizing the rights of people with disabilities. It provides a framework that countries around the world can use to create legislation and policies that embrace the rights and dignity of all people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)—one of the world’s oldest civil rights laws for people with disabilities, which was adopted in 1990—was an important and influential model in developing the CRPD. Like the ADA, the CRPD upholds the importance of independence, dignity, and equality for people with disabilities. The CRPD also normalizes for the global community what was once a groundbreaking concept in U.S. law: reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

People with disabilities around the world have called out for equal rights and for abolishing barriers that keep them from attaining an education, employment, and independent living. They are leading civil rights movements similar to that which in the United States led to the passage of the ADA. The CRPD has provided a road map for the 138 countries which at the time of this report have ratified the treaty and working to realize this vision. These changes are meant to impact the lives of the one billion people around the world who have disabilities.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The CRPD represents a shift in consideration of disability. Older paradigms of disability, such as the medical model of disability, view disability as a problem inside the individual that needs to be fixed by curing the disability. The charity model of disability views people with disabilities as helpless recipients of aid. But for many people, disability is a lifelong component of who they are, which a doctor may not be able to cure. The social model of disability is meant to empower people with disabilities by recognizing their worth and potential and by tearing down barriers and creating pathways to success in education, in employment, and in society.

Mexico proposed the idea of a comprehensive and integral international treaty to promote the rights and dignity of people with disabilities in 2001.[[2]](#footnote-2) Through an ad hoc drafting committee initiated by the United Nations General Assembly, delegations from around the world, including the United States, participated in the creation of the CRPD. The drafting process itself was transformative in that civil society organizations were actively engaged in providing input about what the document should cover; people with disabilities participated throughout the process in both nongovernmental organizations and national delegations. Following adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, the treaty opened for signature in 2007. More than 80 countries became signatories during the opening ceremony. By the end of October 2013, the CRPD had 158 signatories and 138 ratifying states parties.

The CRPD contains 50 articles and applies a cross-disability approach throughout, rather than singling out individual disabilities or condition groups, simply applying the treaty’s values to people with disabilities. The CRPD does not explicitly define “disability” because ratifying countries typically have their own definitions of people with disabilities. The treaty emphasizes the importance of nondiscrimination and equality whether in the classroom, at the workplace, in polling stations during elections, or in society at large. The treaty also highlights the need to fully involve the disability community at all levels of society, from the local and personal level up to the national government level and the government’s interaction with the world community.

Countries that ratify the CRPD are entitled to nominate their citizens to sit on the international Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This Committee can have 18 members at any one time, all elected by States Parties to the CRPD, with consideration given to equitable geographic representation and participation of experts with disabilities.[[3]](#footnote-3) Each State Party submits a report on its compliance with the CRPD to the Committee starting two years after the CRPD enters into force for that party and at least every four years after.[[4]](#footnote-4) The Committee then considers the report and makes “suggestions and general recommendations” to the State Party. This civilian committee can only provide advice to countries about how to implement the CRPD; the committee cannot force a country to follow its advice. The majority of current Committee members are people with disabilities. These experts share their knowledge with countries and help them review their progress under the treaty and offer recommendations in how the countries can continue to move forward. The treaty also creates an opportunity for dialogue between signatory and ratified countries and civil society organizations: an annual Conference of States Parties (COSP) meant for considering matters related to implementation of the CRPD.[[5]](#footnote-5) The annual Conference has become an opportunity for delegates from ratifying countries to exchange experiences, knowledge, and promising practices in implementing the treaty.

Countries around the world are enacting their own domestic legislation in fulfillment of their commitment under ratification to fully implement the treaty. Many are now reviewing and revising their domestic laws and policies affecting people with disabilities following ratification of the CRPD. Some examples of the impact of the treaty in countries around the world include:

* In Canada (ratified March 2010), Nova Scotia is undergoing operational and policy changes with their transit services, based on goals of the CRPD. Other provinces are working to pass laws similar to Rosa’s Law in the U.S., where “mental retardation” in federal legislation is replaced with “intellectual disability.”
* El Salvador (ratified December 2007) has significantly improved its national census, as promoted by the CRPD, resulting in improved budget allocation for services for people with disabilities.
* India (ratified October 2007) is currently in the final stages of developing a new law to reflect the CRPD’s social model (current law is based on a charitable model and has a narrow view of disability).
* Jamaica (ratified March 2007) is the first country to ratify the CRPD: it enacted its National Disability Bill in March 2012
* Kenya (ratified May 2008) has specifically incorporated the rights of people with disabilities based on the principles of the CRPD into its 2010 constitution. This has been one of the first times they have recognized anti-discrimination efforts against people with disabilities in their country.
* Moldova (ratified September 2010) is currently using the CRPD to develop a roadmap for new methods to approach disability domestically with particular focus on de-institutionalization. They are now removing children from institutions and creating resources to enable children with disabilities to remain with their families.
* Nigeria (ratified September 2010) has created a ministerial committee on albinism inspired by the CRPD’s goals of nondiscrimination; children with albinism have a history of serious discrimination in the country.
* Peru (ratified January 2008) recently restored voting rights to people with intellectual disabilities inspired by principles within the CRPD.
* In Russia (signed September 2008), the prime minister has pledged significant funding to make currently inaccessible government buildings accessible to reflect the values of equal access in the CRPD.
* In Turkmenistan (ratified September 2008), the parliament recently received training on the CRPD for consideration in creating future laws and policies.
* United Arab Emirates (ratified March 2010), after signature of the CRPD, enacted a new law focused on promoting positive attitudes towards disability and improving building codes to provide accessibility.

Some observers believe the U.S. could be helpful to countries like Moldova by sharing its own experiences with deinstitutionalization of children and adults with disabilities. The U.S. also could help countries that are starting to address other human rights violations commonly committed against people with disabilities such as infanticide and forced exclusion. France has already been involved with Moldova and some U.S.-based organizations have also been working behind the scenes in Moldova and Peru. However, U.S. ratification of the CRPD would allow the U.S. to take on a more officially recognized and influential role in providing technical guidance to countries that are now taking their first steps toward implementing the CRPD. This could have an impact on 1 billion people with disabilities who live around the world, particularly those who live in developing countries or in isolated rural areas.

***“. . .[For VETs] as an organization that has really been founded on the principles of expanding opportunity for veterans who had fairly significant disabilities… CRPD, the disabilities treaty, will open the world...***

***It [the CRPD] will really help to foster the opportunities that provide employment, the ability to travel, the ability to seek educational opportunities abroad. Community reintegration really requires equal opportunity, and it's unacceptable for us to say that opportunity ends at the borders of the United States. We have to be involved in this process so that disabled veterans are not sidelined, so that people with disabilities are not sidelined as we continue to move into a global economy with global opportunities.”***

**—Heather Ansley**

**Vice President, VetsFirst**

***Consideration of U.S. Ratification of the CRPD***

The United States became the 141st signatory nation when President Barack Obama ordered U.S. signature to the treaty in July 2009. On May 17, 2012, the Obama Administration sent the CRPD to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with a series of nine Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations (RUDs) attached. RUDs are used by countries ratifying international treaties to exempt themselves from particular provisions in a treaty, or to describe how they interpret specific language in a treaty. For example, if existing U.S. law is different from a treaty provision, the U.S. can decide to take a Reservation with respect to the particular provision. This would mean that ratifying the treaty would not require the U.S. to change its current laws. The RUDs proposed by the Obama Administration are discussed in more detail later in this section.

In July 2012, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee held a hearing on the CRPD, and a treaty package, complete with the RUDs recommended by the Obama Administration, was voted out of the Committee and sent to the Senate floor. On December 4, 2012, the United States Senate considered the ratification of the CRPD but fell 5 votes short of the super-majority vote required. Ratification of an international treaty in the United States requires a two-thirds vote of the U.S. Senate. Signing a treaty signifies that the country intends to follow the object and purpose of the treaty in good faith. Ratification signifies that the country will comply with the treaty within its own domestic legal framework.

Media coverage significantly increased after the December 2012 failed vote. Anderson Cooper covered the failed vote on CNN for five days in a row. Today, more than 700 disability, veterans, faith, international development, humanitarian, and business organizations have been advocating for the CRPD to be brought back to the Senate floor for a fresh vote in 2013. These include 22 major veteran service organizations, representing veterans of every generation, from the American Legion to the Student Veterans of America. These also include business organizations such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Business Leadership Network, the Information Technology Industry Council, and the Assistive Technology Industry Association of America.

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee held two hearings on the CRPD, November 5 and November 21, 2013. These hearings are important preliminary procedural steps before the full Senate can hold a new vote on the CRPD. Subsequent committee action and a final vote had not yet been scheduled at the time this report was finalized.

The current legal situation in the United States is that the Americans with Disabilities Act, in combination with many other pieces of legislation, protect many of the same human rights of people with disabilities as the CRPD. This has resulted in more accessible buildings, transportation, telecommunications systems, colleges and universities, and government services throughout the United States. Although some barriers remain, the result of this progress has created more opportunities for Americans with disabilities to gain an education, pursue careers, and participate fully in home and family life, the political process, their communities, and society at wide. Curb cuts, ramps, accessible parking spaces, American Sign Language interpreters, and service animals are some of the more visible ways that the ADA and other U.S. laws have impacted daily life for Americans with disabilities. The U.S. Justice Department and other federal agencies actively address disability rights discrimination in many sectors of American society. These agencies enforce the ADA and other laws that address disability discrimination in state and local governments, places of public accommodation, employment, nursing homes, private entities, stores, restaurants, recreational facilities, air carriers, transportation, and education.

All the federal agencies that are involved with enforcing these disability discrimination laws have thoroughly reviewed the CRPD and compared it closely against existing law. And all of these agencies have affirmed that the CRPD, in the words of Eve Hill, Senior Counselor for the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice, “firmly grounded in and animated by the principles that underlie our U.S. laws.” Because of this, Eve Hill asserts that ratifying the CRPD will not require new legislation in the U.S. and it will not create new rights in the U.S. if the administration’s recommended Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations are put in place. Says Eve Hill, “That’s because we were the model. The influence of the U.S. laws is clear in the way the treaty is written. It mirrors core principles of our disability rights laws. It talks about equality of treatment, nondiscrimination, equal basis with others, all the primary underlying principles of our law, and it incorporates our concepts and mechanisms, independent living, inclusive education, reasonable accommodation, all things taken from what we already do.”

Eve Hill further states: “We have no need to be afraid of the disabilities treaty. The administration has proposed these Reservations, Understandings and Declarations (RUDs). That allows us to be in full compliance with the treaty from day one.”

One of the Reservations proposed by the Obama Administration is a standard Reservation that is typically added to all treaties ratified by the U.S.: this is the Federalism Reservation. This reservation clarifies that nothing in the treaty gives the U.S. federal government any authority or requirement to be involved in any areas that fall within the responsibility of state or local level governments. The Federalism Reservation ensures that state and local governments retain the same powers and authorities under the CRPD as they do without it. For example, Article 12 in the CRPD addresses guardianship issues, which are typically addressed in state and local laws and not at the federal level. The Federalism Reservation ensures that Article 12 cannot be interpreted in a way that would allow the federal government any power to override decisions related to guardianship issues made at the state or local level. In most cases, state and local laws already meet or exceed requirements under the CRPD. In some cases they may fall short, but even under the CRPD it would still be solely within the capacities of individual states to address these areas. The federal government would still not have the obligation or authority to interfere with these state-assigned jurisdictions or responsibilities.

The Obama Administration also has introduced a Private Conduct Reservation, which emphasizes that the federal government has no obligation to interfere in the private lives of private citizens or otherwise require individual people to comply with the CRPD. Only the federal government needs to comply with the treaty. This Reservation was designed to address the concerns of people who want to ensure that the CRPD cannot be used to interfere with areas of people’s personal lives that have historically been protected by the constitution. A Torture Reservation ensures that U.S. treaty obligations under the CRPD would be consistent with those under other ratified treaties, including the Convention against Torture.

One Understanding clarifies that, consistent with U.S. law, the U.S. government views the economic, social, and cultural rights covered in the CRPD as being about nondiscrimination and equal access, not about establishing special programs. Other Understandings say that CRPD implementation will be consistent with the First Amendment, that existing U.S. law provides the basis for the equal pay for equal work provision in Article 27 of the CRPD, that the right to equal employment opportunity does not affect uniformed employees of the U.S. military departments, and that existing U.S. law on the definition of disability will be used to define disability for implementation of the CRPD. The Administration also includes a Declaration which reinforces that the CRPD, as with other treaties ratified by the U.S., is not self-executing. This means that U.S. courts cannot directly enforce the treaty. The rights of people with disabilities continue to be protected under federal laws or under state laws as they are now: the treaty cannot by itself, independently of U.S. law makers, create new rights for people with disabilities not already covered in U.S. law. The United States Supreme Court has already established precedent in past decisions that an international treaty cannot be binding on domestic law unless Congress has enacted statues implementing it, or unless the treaty not only declares itself “self-executing” but also is ratified on that basis. The CRPD is not self-executing, and the Non Self-Executing Declaration reinforces that nothing in the treaty can be implemented until U.S. Congress implements it.

Despite the existing legal situation, and the judgment of experienced government personnel and legal experts that the CRPD together with the RUDs proposed by the current administration would have no direct impact on U.S. law independently of voluntary legislative action, some people opposed to the CRPD have raised concerns about issues such as abortion, home schooling, and spanking. But Eve Hill notes that she has carefully reviewed the text of the CRPD and confirms that the treaty does not give the right to abortion, nor does it ban abortion. What it does say is that the right to healthcare services must be provided to people with disabilities on an equal basis as everyone else. This includes the right to access the same kinds of healthcare and reproductive rights that are given to everyone else. In essence, this is a nondiscrimination right: whatever laws exist related to abortion need to be applied the same way with people with disabilities that they are with people who do not have disabilities. The treaty package includes a statement that the treaty’s approach to health services is a nondiscrimination provision that does not address abortion. U.S. domestic laws already require that health services offered to other people cannot discriminate on the basis of disability. The CRPD does confirm the value that every person with a disability has the right to life.

Similar principles apply to issues such as homeschooling or spanking. Language in the treaty about the “best interest of the child” is similar to already existing U.S. law. The right of the child is balanced with the rights of parents. In fact, the treaty upholds and protects the important role that parents play in raising children with disabilities. For example, the treaty says that children should not ever be separated from their parents on the basis of a disability either on the part of the child or either of the parents.

Some opponents also have raised concerns about how the CRPD would affect U.S. sovereignty. Eve Hill asserts that the treaty does not undermine U.S. authority. The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that oversees the implementation of the CRPD can only serve in an advisory capacity. It does not have the authority to enforce the treaty or to force ratifying countries to comply with it. Their role is to provide advice and guidance. Although some CRPD opponents reject the idea that other countries could have new ideas to offer to the U.S., some CRPD advocates argue that we as a country should not be afraid to receive advice or listen to ideas.

Also, no UN officials or government officials are on the Committee. The Committee is comprised of 18 civilians from around the world, 15 of whom are themselves people with disabilities. At present, the U.S. is not eligible to join the Committee. If the U.S. could join the Committee, it would have a strong vehicle to use its advice and ideas to influence how the treaty is implemented in other countries. Even without joining the committee, the U.S. also could play a more significant, influential role in the annual Conference of States Parties (COSP), which has become a major platform for the global community to discuss disability rights and exchange ideas and best practices. Until and unless the U.S. ratifies the CRPD, people from the U.S. can only attend the annual COSP as passive observers rather than active participants with the right to disseminate its own ideas to others. Because the COSP has become such a major platform for dialogue on disability rights, some observers such as John Wodatch, former Chief of the Disability Rights Section in the U.S. Department of Justice, say that the U.S. has effectively become excluded from world discussion on disability. Ratifying the CRPD, and gaining the right to participate more actively in COSP, could enable the U.S. to resume its previous role as a key leader in disability rights.

The only obligation that the U.S. would need to take on after ratification is to submit a report every four years to the Committee on how it is implementing the CRPD. This is the same obligation that the U.S. already implements for various other human rights treaties that it has ratified. The U.S. is already party to more than 10,000 treaties and international agreements, which many observers believe have strengthened its position as a global leader.

The CRPD already has led to new laws similar to the ADA and other U.S. legislation in other countries, with similar results. U.S. ratification of the CRPD, and the resulting increase in opportunities for the U.S. to share its decades of expertise with disability rights legislation with other countries, could help accelerate this progress abroad. Disabled People’s Organizations in other countries already look to the United States to learn how U.S.-based DPOs have created strong organizations that work, with ever increasing effectiveness, with governments at the federal, state, county, city, and township levels. Ratification could increase U.S. credibility and its official role in providing technical assistance to governments abroad.

Some American businesses and business organizations believe that U.S. ratification of the CRPD would strengthen the ability of U.S. businesses to access international markets and global commerce opportunities. They anticipate a particular impact on U.S. assistive technology companies, accessibility products, and accessibility services. They also anticipate an impact on U.S. public and private research and development and academic leadership in global accessibility innovations. The American business community argues that U.S. ratification of the CRPD would allow the U.S.[[6]](#footnote-6) to take on a stronger role in multi-lateral dialogue on the best ways to standardize accessibility standards, products, assistive technology, and other disability-related features in the market. This, in turn, would strengthen the ability of U.S. business to compete in the global market as the demand for accessible products and assistive technology continues to grow with the increased implementation of the CRPD.

The business community also asserts that U.S. ratification of the CRPD would impact the travel and tourism market. Accessible travel options and accessibility at common tourist destinations are already increasing in importance and commonality following the implementation of the CRPD in a growing number of countries. U.S. ratification would lend more credibility and influence to American businesses that are striving to help influence accessible and inclusive travel and tourism abroad or provide technical guidance and assistance. This in turn would improve the competitiveness of American businesses involved with the international travel and tourism industry. CRPD advocates further suggest that increased accessibility and inclusion abroad increases opportunities for workers with disabilities to move abroad to work at international subsidiary offices of U.S.-owned businesses.

***“We’re now getting close to our 25th anniversary for the Americans with Disabilities Act. So what do you want your legacy to be? I would say that our legacy should be ratification of the CRPD. I think it would be the best way to affirm what we did with the ADA 25 years ago.”* —Jeff Rosen  
 Chair, National Council on Disability**

***Voices for United States ratification***

Tony Coelho, former U.S. Congressman and ADA sponsor: “When we pass the treaty, our elected officials have the moral authority, as they travel across the world, to go to governments and say, you are mistreating your folks who have disabilities. And we have the moral authority to say so because we’ve signed the treaty. If we don’t sign the treaty, we don’t have the moral authority to say so. We don’t have a right to be judging other people if we’re unwilling to sign the treaty! [….] The treaty doesn’t cost any money. [….] But it establishes […] our leadership that we have been providing over the years. We’re the leader in disability rights! But if we refuse to sign the treaty, what does that say to the rest of the world? What does that say in regards to our moral authority about disability rights? What does that say to the rest of the world that doesn’t want to provide disability rights to their people? What does that say to those countries who sterilize women who have disabled children? Or who sterilize disabled women? What does it say to countries that force abortions [on those] who have disabled children in their bodies.”

One of the lead organizations in helping to write the Americans with Disabilities Act, the National Council on Disability, has also been providing information on the CRPD to the national disability community since 2002.

Jeff Rosen, Chair, National Council on Disability: “What CRPD will do, basically, is it will give a civil rights agenda that will help to strengthen the allies and the international human rights agenda. Our national experience with the Americans with Disabilities Act, which is recognized worldwide as containing some of the most progressive and innovative concepts to promote societal inclusion of people with disabilities, will be a valuable contribution to this international process. Some of the ADA provisions can be informed and conceivably strengthened by the experience of other countries. The U.S. will become part of a multinational dialogue that strengthens the worldwide understanding of disability issues. So that’s what we [National Council on Disability] had to say back in 2002. We stood, arm in arm, with USICD, all you folks out there, and said that we need this, we need this to help our goals.”

Jeff Rosen: “…I am not a person who has an issue with a physical disability. I’m fine the way I am. You’re all fine the way you are. The issue is with, of course, the attitudes, the discrimination. But more than that, the issue is with the environment itself. The environment needs to be changed. It needs to become more accessible to allow for interpretation, to allow for CART services, to allow for all of the accessibility accommodations that we’re looking for. When we have those, we’re fine. We can move around just fine. The CRPD embodies that concept. It doesn’t define disabilities as a physical issue. It defines disability as an environmental issue that needs to be resolved. Why is it that way? Because we have made it that way. The UN, when they developed the CRPD, for the first time ever in history they actually included NGOs with disability subject matter experts. That old quote, ‘Nothing about us without us,’ we caused CRPD to be written the way that it is, and it’s a beautiful document. It is our living document. It is who we are. It’s not for us. We own it.”

Jeff Rosen: “To me, the CRPD is critical, because it allows us to have a common dialogue with other citizens of the world. It allows us to sit down and discuss disability law in a common language, which is very important. Many of us are well traveled, and we know if we go … [to] other countries and we try to preach to them, […] ‘Well, we have this Americans with Disabilities Act and it’s so fabulous, […] people of China are not looking at the Americans with Disabilities Act. They are looking for other sources of authority. In China, they have a constitutional law that protects people with disabilities. But if we had the CRPD and China has ratified, then we can start that dialogue about the CRPD from a common experience.”

Jeff Rosen: “We’re now getting close to our 25th anniversary for the Americans with Disabilities Act. So what do you want your legacy to be? I would say that our legacy should be ratification of the CRPD. I think it would be the best way to affirm what we did with the ADA 25 years ago.”

Judy Heumann, Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, U.S. Department of State, on disability rights legislation in general (not on the CRPD): “Those with disabilities and those without disabilities who have, as a result of the Americans with Disabilities Act and many other pieces of legislation that we have passed over the last number of decades, recognized the value of ensuring that people with various forms of disabilities have the right to be included in our society, and that the inclusion of disabled people in society does not just result in a benefit for those of us with disabilities, but truly results in a benefit for society overall.”

Heather Ansley, Vice President, VetsFirst: “VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association, has been around since 1946, […]. Throughout our history, we’ve focused not only on access to services for veterans through the Department of Veterans Affairs, but also how we can make the world accessible for all people with disabilities. We have been involved in many of the fights [for] the Rehab Act [of 1973], the Air Carrier Access Act, the Fair Housing Amendments Act, the ADA, the ADA Amendments. […] The reason that we as an organization that represents disabled veterans have historically been involved in these fights is because these rights really foster the opportunity for community integration, to be able to be employed, to be able to have a home, to travel, and the 5.5 million veterans who have disabilities really deserve that the country take the next step. That’s really opening the country and the world up to all people with disabilities. That’s really why, as an organization that has really been founded on the principles of expanding opportunity for veterans who had fairly significant disabilities, that CRPD, the disabilities treaty, will open the world.”

Heather Ansley: “It [the CRPD] will really help to foster the opportunities that provide employment, the ability to travel, the ability to seek educational opportunities abroad. Community reintegration really requires equal opportunity, and it's unacceptable for us to say that opportunity ends at the borders of the United States. We have to be involved in this process so that disabled veterans are not sidelined, so that people with disabilities are not sidelined as we continue to move into a global economy with global opportunities.”

Tom Zampieri, Director of Government Relations, Blinded Veterans Association: “We're a congressionally chartered veteran’s service organization, like many of the others that are actively engaged in this effort. We started in 1945 in a roomful of 118 World War II blinded service members that had come back from basically France, and they said we need to do something to change the way blind veterans are treated in this country. Today, we continue that effort. With this treaty […] if you looked at all of the news media reports the day that this thing was defeated, it was astonishing. I'd been involved in all sorts of legislative efforts over the last 20 years. As an army veteran who's traveled around to different parts of the world, it's just astounding that we place our lives on the line to defend our rights and freedoms and everything, then our great leaders won't vote for a treaty like this.”

Eric Rosenthal, Executive Director, Disability Rights International: “We have a broad constituency of people who not only care about disability rights, but who care about the basic humanity of people with disabilities, both in the United States and abroad. I have been doing this work now for 20 years, trying to shine the spotlight of public attention on what is one of the truly great and overlooked humanitarian crises going on in the world today. […] The untold numbers of people with disabilities who are excluded, segregated from society on the basis of their disabilities, we can't even begin to put a number on it. There is no UN agency, there's no development organization, there's no human rights organization that has even begun to come close to grasping the vast numbers of people who are segregated from society in orphanages, psychiatric facilities, nursing homes, juvenile detention centers, not to mention prisons and jails. I have been doing this work, as said, more than 20 years, and have gone to Africa, Asia, South America, Eastern Europe, and seen what is going on inside, behind the closed doors of these institutions. I can tell you it is truly horrifying. If you look at our website, Disability Rights International, we've got extensive video and photo documentations what goes on there. It is heartbreaking. Children and adults are literally left to die. Those who survive [the lack of supports and services] live in atrocious conditions. We have found, in many countries, children literally left tied to beds. We have found people denied medical care on the basis of their disability.”

Eric Rosenthal: “I've recently come back from the Republic of Georgia. In the town of Tbilisi, we visited the infants’ house. The facility has a 30% mortality rate for children with disabilities. Every year, one third of the children die in the facility. We asked them, because the nondisabled children mostly don't die, why is it that they are dying at such large numbers? We found that they were not given medical care. The doctors in the country say, ‘Well, they're already damaged and they don't have prospect of much of a future life, so we will not provide them with medical care.’ The doctors refuse to treat them. They are literally being held. The institution is not dirty. It's clean. Lots of foreign aid money. It's built up, but they are simply denied medical care. Getting, documenting this problem is very, very hard, because most people won't admit to it. But to have them actually tell us that, we know it is [occurring] on a larger scale.”

Eric Rosenthal: “The problem of infanticide, children born with visible disabilities in poor families. There are only so many resources to go around. But the idea there is state collusion with it. For those children who do survive, very often families are told, ‘Put your child in the institution before you become too emotionally attached to them.’ And frankly, I have interviewed heartbroken families. I cannot tell you the most difficult conversations are with family members who love their children, who want to keep them at home, who desperately are trying to do so, but without community supports, without accessibility, without access to education, it's a sentence to poverty and exclusion for people in much of the world.”

Eric Rosenthal: “I just got back from Ukraine. I was in the town of Drohobych in a small institution, I met a young woman, an English teacher, very well educated, spoke well. She was in the process of saying goodbye to her 6‑year‑old child she had desperately tried to keep at home. Her husband had left her because of the difficulties of it [the child]. She was doing what she could, had to say goodbye to that child.”

Eric Rosenthal: “The orphanage problem, we have a beginning of the grasp how big it is, 10 million children in orphanages around the world, at least. Many die in the facilities. The mortality rates are very high. Studies in Russia have shown when children leave orphanages, 10 percent of the children leaving orphanages in Russia commit suicide within a few years of leaving. Many end up trafficked. The truth is many of the children with disabilities go from the orphanage to psychiatric hospital to the nursing home and spend a lifetime in institutions. Again, [this is] a vast, vast problem. We need to take a strong stand on it, and what the Convention says, the core, the concept of human rights, is that everyone is a human being, they have the same rights as all other people, and that's not just curb cuts, that's the right to exist as a human, to not be denied the medical care needed to stay alive, to not be segregated from society, to be part of society.”

Eric Rosenthal: “In Mexico we also found that there is, because of a lack of oversight system, children put into institutions literally disappear. We met the grandmother of a woman who had gone around. Her child, her grandchild was taken away from her parents, put in an orphanage. She went to that orphanage and the child was gone. It turned out some of the orphanages in Mexico, as we found in many other countries, are actually fronts for organized crime and the children were trafficked right out of the orphanage. Trafficked for forced labor, trafficked for sex. We have a big anti‑trafficking program. How much of that looks at children with disabilities. Now, why does ratification of this treaty matter? Number one, it raises the profile of this fundamental human rights issue. It is a call to action. If we're going to speak out about basic human rights, we have to start looking at the most vulnerable people in every society. Our government can put its weight both politically and financially behind these issues.

Eric Rosenthal: “We have tremendous expertise. We have in the United States moved from a period when we too segregated people with disabilities to integrating them into society. We have so much to offer in terms of technical assistance and resources to challenge and attack that problem worldwide by putting the U.S. on the map in that area as an avenue for us providing financial support and technical assistance in this area. Much of what human rights is about is, frankly, about publicly exposing, shaming and taking a stand of we will not accept, we will not go with business as usual, if you are letting your children die. What credibility do we have in saying our foreign relations as a country are going to depend on the protection of disability rights if we are not willing to enter into the same framework that all the other countries are entering into?”

“At core, a convention, a treaty is a common standard of achievement--a common, a universal. It levels the playing field. It says every country, not just some American special thing that we invented, a luxury of a rich country, every country will be judged according to the same standards. We will judge you, and you are welcome to come judge us. The core implementation mechanism for the treaty is not a court. The core implementation mechanism is that every four years we have to report to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of People with Disabilities on what we do in the United States.”

Eric Rosenthal: “Frankly, while we have a long way to go in some areas, we can be proud of what we do in the disability rights area. We have nothing to hide. We should be open to international scrutiny, and by the same token, by opening ourselves to international scrutiny, by writing a report every four years and let them comment on what we do, we get to comment on what they do. We get to take a stand on these life‑threatening and vast human rights violations that are going on around the world, and it's about time we took a strong stand, and therefore I welcome your support. I call on you to do everything you can, because the United States can make a difference in saving the lives of millions and millions of children and adults with disabilities around the world.”

Susan Mazrui, Director of Public Policy, AT&T Services, Inc.: “Well, the world may be flat, but we still need ramps. That's really the bottom line here. For … U.S. businesses that support the UN CRPD and the U.S. Chamber [of Commerce], traditionally we're not groups of people who like regulations […]. One of the reasons that our companies support this effort is because we're already doing it. It doesn't require us to do, especially with the RUDs, to do anything more that we're doing right now, but it does enable us to tap into markets, to have the opportunity to influence other countries to work on standards that we have worked on for years, have them adopt those standards. It provides us with a business market. We do have a global marketplace today. And the U.S. has many, many companies who have worked in the area of accessibility. They're not necessarily assistive technology companies. They're companies like IBM, companies like Apple, companies like AT&T, who have put significant work in accessibility as part of business as usual.”

Susan Mazrui: “If we're in a situation where we can market what we're doing, that we can influence the standards that are being adopted so we're not developing a Bolivian technology device or a different standard for each different country, we're much better off as a business as a whole. We also believe that if we are going to meet our aspirational goals of hiring people with disabilities and providing equal opportunities, which AT&T is committed to and many other U.S. companies are, we need to be able to provide opportunities for those in business to travel, to learn and get a global perspective, because the reality is you work in a global marketplace. We also have to be able to take advantage of people who live in other countries who have these skill sets and expertise that we need to fill. There may not be a huge number of people with specific skill sets around technology that we need. We need to be able to hire those people as well.”

Susan Mazrui: “If we're going to have a level playing field, we need to have the opportunity to go out and say we've been there, we've tried these means, these have worked well, we would like you to adopt a similar approach, and we believe that we can help you with that as companies that have worked on these issues historically. We don't believe that there is any additional … requirements. We're covered quite well, and some companies would say too well, but AT&T would say quite well, regarding disability rights issues. But if we then go into forums and we say we understand accessibility, we understand how to get there, we understand the technology, we want you to move forward because we think this is in the best interest of people with disabilities in your country, and your country as a whole, and they come back to us, they say, you know, we find it kind of odd you haven't ratified this, it makes it a little difficult. I've been in business meetings where we've talked about standards; we've talked about accessibility, and in the side meetings people come up, "Why haven't you ratified?" From a business perspective I can't think of a good reason. From a perspective of a person with a disability, I can't think of a good reason why we haven't. [….] So there's actually, for U.S. companies, a business advantage for it. […] We need to make sure that folks understand that it's not harmful to business; it's not going to make a difference to a small mom‑and‑pop company. Our rules stay the same. But we do have the opportunity to tap into a global market, and it's important for us to be able to do that, and it's important for us to influence the standards that are set in terms of technology that are not U.S. based, but worldwide, and this gives us the authority to do so.”

David Feinman, Senior Legislative Associate, Jewish Federations of North America: “[M]embers of Congress have values too, and these values drive the work they do […]. They, for the most part, have faith. [….] So when I have asked advocates from the Jewish community to contact Senators about this treaty, they’ve really found that talking about their perspective as Jews or as people of faith is a great equalizer when it comes to the politics that tend to override everything else we do in Washington. It’s an opportunity to have a conversation on a basis that has very little to do with polling and re-election and conservative vs. liberal, Democrat vs. republican. It’s about who we are as people, how we view our community and […] our belief through God about how others should experience the world. […] [S]ometimes just leveling with [Senators] as human beings and as people of faith can help break the divide that, even when you explain all of the overwhelmingly positive facts about this treaty, sometimes all those facts end up in a cloud of politicization they can’t hear.”

Ellen Buchman, Vice President of Field Operations, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human rights: “… [The CRPD] goes to the heart of why the Leadership Conference is so focused on this as a human rights issue, which is a civil rights issue as well; we know that nearly 20% of all Americans live with some form of disability. [….] In looking back on our history, we know any form of segregation is not acceptable, because it essentially denigrates rights for […] individuals facing whatever their uphill battle is. We’re also quite clear that the highest rates among these folks are among the people in communities of color …. For the Leadership Conference, just those two points alone make this issue, make this treaty’s enactment a no-brainer.”

Jessica Cox, disability advocate: “I just took a trip in April with Handicap International over to Ethiopia, who has ratified … the CRPD. I saw the effects of how it helps with education. One person I wanted to share her stories that she was kept at home for 14 years. Her parents didn’t see the need to bring her to school because of her disabilities. But she recently was invited to go to school through Handicap International, has been there for a year, learning to read, despite her emotional disabilities as well as some intellectual disabilities. But she said one thing she wants me to pass on to everyone else … she said send your children with disabilities to school.”

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry: “[The CRPD’s] purpose lies squarely in the best traditions of our great country. The disabilities treaty […] is about American leadership. It’s about the affirmation of who we are and what we stand for in the eyes of the world. If you’re a disabled student who dreams of going to school overseas, our joining the disabilities treaty will help to pen the world to meet your aspirations for equality of opportunity and accessibility when you go overseas. If you’re a business person with expertise in accessible technologies, our joining this treaty will help create new markets for your products as other countries rise to meet our standards and demand our products in order to help their citizens. And if you’re a disabled veteran who risked life and limb in service to our country, our joining this treaty will help ensure that you can work…you can study… you can travel abroad with dignity and respect and know that hotels and restaurants, businesses will be accessible to you.”

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry: “This treaty doesn’t affect America except that we export America’s values of nondiscrimination against all people living with disabilities. […] The disabilities treaty does not contain one single onerous mandate. It simply says that other countries should do what we did 23 years ago when we set the gold standard and passed the Americans with Disabilities Act. […] Joining the disabilities treaty isn’t about changing American behavior. It’s about getting the rest of the world to raise their disability standards for the treatment of people with disabilities and raise them to our level. It’s that simple. In four simple words, the treaty says to other countries that don’t protect the rights of disabled people: Be more like us. To countries that warehouse children with disabilities, we ask them to be more like us. To countries that leave children to die, because they have a disability in the first place, we ask them to be more like us. Let those children live. To countries that force children with disabilities to abandon education, we ask them to be more like us. Give those children an opportunity.”

Justin Whitlock Dart, Jr. - widely recognized as “the father of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” a leader of the international disability rights movement and a renowned human rights activist, as quoted by Jeff Rosen at the NCD and USICD Educational Forum in 2013:

“Almost all great moral revolutions have been led by apparently ordinary people who became passionate, single minded advocates, who destroyed stereotypes with the magic sword of truth, who transcended politics, hate, and fear and united the people in their personal universes, who struggled for a world of justice. You do have the power to create an international convention that will be the Declaration of Independence for billions of people in the 21st century. No soldier ever died for a better cause." . . .This Convention must not be simply another ritual of words to allow paternalists and bit players to say they have done their duty to people with disabilities. It must guarantee stronger, not weaker, rights and remedies and laws like the ADA. If we want a meaningful Convention we must give up business as usual and fight as if the lives of billions depended on it, because they do." (Justin Dart, April 2002)

***Appendices***

**NCD and USICD Educational Forum on the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

September 17, 2012  9:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST

8:30      **Arrivals & Registration**

9:00      **Welcome** Tony Coelho, *Executive Board, USICD*

9:10     **Introduction of Keynote**  Jeff Rosen, *Chair, NCD*

**Keynote Speaker**     Valerie Jarrett, *Senior Advisor to the President of the United States (Invited)*

9:30 **Treaty 101** David Morrissey, *Executive Director*, *USICD*

Esmé Grant, *Disability Rights Program Manager, USICD*

9:50      **Ratification 101 Panel**  Moderated by Lynnae Ruttledge, *Board Member, NCD*

                         Judy Heumann, *Special Advisor for International Disability Rights, U.S. Department of State*

Eve Hill, *Senior Counselor for Asst. Attorney General for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Justice*

John Wodatch*, former Chief of the Disability Rights Section, U.S. Department of Justice*

10:30 **Break**

10:45    **Voices for Ratification**  Moderated by Esmé Grant, *USICD*

Heather Ansley, *Vice President,* *VetsFirst*

Tom Zampieri, *Director of Government Relations,* *BVA*

                                                Eric Rosenthal, *Executive Director,* *Disability Rights International*

Susan Mazrui*, Director of Public Policy, AT&T Services, Inc.*

Ellen Buchman, *Vice President of Field Operations, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights*

David Feinman, *Senior Legislative Associate, Jewish Federations of North America*

11:30**Participant dialogue**                                                   Moderated by David Morrissey, *USICD*

12:00    **Secretary Kerry video message**

**FORUM SPEAKERS’ BIOGRAPHIES**

**Heather Ansley -** The Vice President of VetsFirst, a program of United Spinal Association. Ms. Ansley began her tenure with the organization in December 2009. She is responsible for developing and advocating for the public policy priorities of VetsFirst and promoting collaboration between disability organizations and veterans service organizations. She also serves as a co-chair of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Veterans Task Force. Prior to her arrival at VetsFirst, she served as the Director of Policy and Advocacy for the Lutheran Services in America Disability Network. Before arriving in Washington, D.C., she served as a Research Attorney for The Honorable Steve Leben with the Kansas Court of Appeals. Prior to attending law school, she worked in the office of former U.S. Representative Kenny Hulshof (R-MO) where she assisted constituents with problems involving federal agencies. She also served as the congressional and intergovernmental affairs specialist at the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s Region VII office in Kansas City, Missouri.

**Ellen Buchman – The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights**

Ellen Buchman is vice president, field operations, for The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (The Leadership Conference) and The Leadership Conference Education Fund (The Education Fund). Ellen spends much of her time developing strategies for the coalition’s field campaigns; leading and managing the field operations staff in support of the efforts of state and local coalition organizations in educating and mobilizing their respective members; building and conducting training around coalition-model organizing campaigns in the states/regions; creating materials and tools that enable The Leadership Conference’s national, state and local partners and leaders to alert and educate their constituencies of federal public policy efforts; and meeting with and speaking to national coalition organizations that work with The Leadership Conference/The Education Fund on the issues effecting civil and equal rights at the federal, state, and local levels. Further, Ellen has also authored training materials and an outreach plan to engage activists in The Leadership Conference/The Education Fund priority issues in states across the country. She has been a member of the staff of The Leadership Conference since 2003.

**The Honorable Tony Coelho -** Tony Coelho is a former United States congressman and primary author and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act.  Coelho served in Congress for six terms until his resignation in 1989. Coelho is credited as the primary author and sponsor of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law by President George H.W. Bush. Four years after the law's passage, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 800,000 more people with significant disabilities had found employment than were employed when the ADA was first enacted. Coelho was appointed to serve as chairman of the President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, a position he held from 1994 to 2001. He also served as vice chair of the National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. Coelho is a former chairman and current member of the Epilepsy Foundation's board of directors and served as board chairman of the American Association of People with Disabilities. He currently sits on the board of the U.S. International Council on Disabilities and is working towards U.S. ratification of the CRPD.

**David Feinman – Jewish Federations of North America**

**David Feinman** has been Senior Legislative Associate since January 2010. In this capacity, Dave promotes the interests and concerns of 153 Jewish Federations and more than 300 independent communities to Members of Congress and the Obama Administration on a wide range of public policy issues, including the rights and social service needs of people with disabilities, poverty and nutrition issues, and foreign policy issues of concern to the Jewish community. Dave also co-chairs, along with Rabbi Lynne Landsberg of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the Jewish Disability Network, a consortium of more than 25 Jewish organizations active in promoting the rights and providing for the needs of people with disabilities. Additionally, he advances interfaith dialogue on disability policy issues through his role on the Steering Committee of the Interfaith Disability Advocacy Coalition, led by Ginny Thornburgh of the American Association of People with Disabilities.

**Esmé Grant – U.S. International Council on Disabilities**

Esmé Grant manages USICD's Disability Rights Program.  She oversees the CRPD Education and Advocacy Initiative and works on issues including disability inclusiveness in foreign development and promotion of disability rights within U.S. foreign affairs. Esmé has past appointments with the ABA Commission on Mental and Physical Disability Law and currently sits on the American Branch of International Law Association’s Disability Committee.  She is the co-chair of the International Task Force for the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities.  Esmé has degrees in French, International Relations and a Juris Doctorate degree with a public interest specialization and focus on cross-disability issues. Esmé is a licensed attorney with the California Bar Association and has authored multiple legal publications on the topic of disability.

**Judith E. Heumann – U.S. Department of State**

Judith E. Heumann is an internationally recognized leader in the disability community and a lifelong civil rights advocate for disadvantaged people. She serves as the appointed Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the U.S. Department of State. She previously served as the Director for the Department on Disability Services for the District of Columbia, where she was responsible for the Developmental Disability Administration and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. From June 2002- 2006, Judith E. Heumann served as the World Bank's first Adviser on Disability and Development. In this position, Heumann led the World Bank's disability work to expand the Bank’s knowledge and capability to work with governments and civil society on including disability in the Bank discussions with client countries. From 1993 to 2001, Heumann served in the Clinton Administration as the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education. Heumann was responsible for the implementation of legislation at the national level for programs in special education, disability research, vocational rehabilitation and independent living, serving more than 8 million youth and adults with disabilities.

**Eve Hill – U.S. Department of Justice**

Eve Hill is a nationally known expert on disability rights law. Ms. Hill is Deputy Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice, where she is responsible for oversight of the Division’s disability rights enforcement. Ms. Hill was previously Of Counsel with the law firm of Brown Goldstein & Levy, where she participated in the firm’s disability rights practice. Prior to joining Brown Goldstein & Levy, Ms. Hill was Senior Vice President of the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University (in the Washington, DC office), where she was responsible for the Institute’s disability civil rights work. Previously, Ms. Hill was the founding Director of the Washington DC Office of Disability Rights, a Cabinet-level DC government agency dedicated to improving access for people with disabilities to government programs. Prior to joining the District, Ms. Hill was Executive Director of the Disability Rights Legal Center in Los Angeles. She was also a Visiting Associate Professor of Law at Loyola Law School. Ms. Hill is the co-author of a treatise and a casebook on “Disability Civil Rights Law and Policy”.

**Valerie B. Jarrett – The U.S. White House**

Valerie B. Jarrett is a Senior Advisor to President Barack Obama. She oversees the Offices of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs and chairs the White House Council on Women and Girls. Prior to joining the Obama Administration, she was the Chief Executive Officer of The Habitat Company. She also served as Co-Chair of the Obama-Biden Presidential Transition Team, and Senior Advisor to Obama's presidential campaign. Ms. Jarrett has held positions in both the public and private sector, including the Chairman of the Chicago Transit Board, the Commissioner of Planning and Development for the City of Chicago, and Deputy Chief of Staff for Mayor Richard M. Daley. She also practiced law with two private law firms. Jarrett also served as a director of corporate and not for profit boards, including Chairman of the Board of the Chicago Stock Exchange, Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, and Chairman of the University of Chicago Medical Center Board of Trustees.

**Susan Mazrui – AT&T Services, Inc.**

Ms. Mazrui began work at Pacific Bell in 1994 where she gained experience in marketing, external and regulatory affairs. In 1998, she moved to the wireless field where she developed strategies for addressing Hearing Aid Compatibility and other state and federal compliance-related activities. Ms. Mazrui also assisted in the development of Section 255 and 508 product development strategies in SBC and Cingular Wireless. From 1996-2007, she facilitated the Wireless Access Task Force, composed of national consumer advocates and currently works on a range of disability and consumer related initiatives at AT&T.

**David Morrissey – U.S. International Council on Disabilities**

A professional in the nonprofit sector for over a decade, Morrissey has worked to advance missions of disability and independent living, HIV/AIDS care and prevention, and community volunteerism.  He has presented internationally on developing disabled people’s organizations and the transition to adulthood for youth with disabilities, with particular focus on Vietnam and its disability community.   As the 2007 Disability Policy Leadership Fellow for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Morrissey was on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Expert Working Group on Transition at the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities.  In 2010, he served as Private Sector Advisor in the United States delegation to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review of the U.S. human rights record.  Morrissey was a member of the inaugural class of the Clinton School of Public Service where he earned his Master of Public Service degree and conducted service projects in the Arkansas Delta and in Vietnam.

**Jeff Rosen – National Council on Disability**

Serving as the current appointed Chair of the National Council, Jeff Rosen is a third generation deaf person active in the disability movement. Mr. Rosen is the General Counsel to ZVRS, a company that provides video interpreting services and products. Prior to joining ZVRS, Mr. Rosen served as the General Counsel and Vice President of Government Relations of Snap!VRS from 2007 until 2011. Previously, he served as the General Counsel and Director of Policy for the National Council on Disability from 2000 to 2007. He was an attorney at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from 1987 to 2000. Mr. Rosen is Treasurer of the United States International Council on Disabilities, a Member of the National Association of the Deaf Employment Task Force, and serves as an advisor to the World Federation of the Deaf. Mr. Rosen attended Gallaudet University where he received a B.A. He earned a J.D. from the University of Washington.

**Eric Rosenthal – Disability Rights International**

Eric Rosenthal is Founder and Executive Director of Disability Rights International (DRI). Since establishing DRI in 1993, Rosenthal has trained human rights and disability activists and provided assistance to governments and international development organizations worldwide.  Rosenthal has conducted investigations and trained activists in more than 25 countries.  DRI reports have brought worldwide attention to the rights of people with disabilities. Rosenthal has served as a consultant to the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the U.S. National Council on Disability (NCD).  On behalf of NCD, he co-authored*U.S. Foreign Policy and Disability (September* 2003), a report that led to legislation to make U.S. foreign assistance accessible to people with disabilities.   The report calls on the United States to extend the enforcement of U.S. disability rights law to all U.S. government-funded programs abroad.

**Lynnae Ruttledge – National Council on Disability**

Serving as a Co-Chair on the National Council on Disability, Lynnae Ruttledge is a disability policy advisor to an Irish-based international research institute, DOCTRID (Daughters of Charity, Technology Research into Disability). Ms. Ruttledge served on the Long-Term Care Commission in 2013 and as Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration with the U.S. Department of Education from 2010 to 2012. From 2005 to 2009, she served as the Director of the Washington Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Previously, Ms. Ruttledge held executive level leadership positions in the Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Committed to international diplomacy and goodwill, she has been affiliated with Mobility International USA since 1988. In 2000, Ms. Ruttledge was honored with the Governor's Award as Disabled Oregonian of the Year. In 2007, she received the Washington Governor’s Award for Leadership in Management.

**John Wodatch, Esq.** **– U.S. Department of Justice**

Formerly Chief of the Disability Rights Section, John Wodatch is a disability rights attorney who recently retired after 42 years of federal government service. He authored regulations implementing section 504 of the Rehab Act, was the Department of Justice’s chief technical expert during the writing and passage of the ADA, oversaw the development of DOJ’s 1991 ADA regulations, created DOJ’s initial ADA technical assistance programs, and assembled the department’s ADA enforcement staff. From 1990 until 2011 he served as the Director and Section Chief overseeing all interpretation, technical assistance, and enforcement of the ADA at DOJ. Just before he retired, he was responsible for the first major revision of the department's ADA regulations, including the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design. He is now serving clients as an expert in the application of the ADA's requirements for accessible design and program accessibility for state and local governments and private businesses. On the international level, John is continuing his work seeking U.S. ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**Tom Zampieri – Blinded Veterans Association**

Dr. Tom Zampieri is director of government relations at the Blinded Veterans Association national headquarters in Washington DC, where he has served since April 2005. Dr. Zampieri served on active duty in the U.S. Army from 1972 to 1975 as a medic. Dr. Zampieri has worked for several years on recommendations for the Veteran Service Organizations annual independent budget sent to the White House, VHA, and Congress on VA appropriations, health care and benefits issues. He has experience with submitting written congressional testimony, development of several legislative briefing papers, white papers, has provided congressional testimony before House VA Committee, and visited congressional offices in recent years working on various VA, Department of Defense, and federal health care and disability issues. Previously, he was employed in the healthcare field, as clinical physician assistant for over 23 years, 19 of those within the Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers in Canandaigua, New York, as well as Richmond, Virginia, and Houston, Texas.

**THE DISABILITY TREATY**

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is an international disability treaty that was inspired by U.S. leadership in recognizing the rights of people with disabilities. The CRPD is a vital framework for creating legislation and policies around the world that embrace the rights and dignity of all people with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was the model for the CRPD, which values of independence and respect and concept of reasonable accommodation are echoed throughout the treaty.

The United States signed the CRPD in 2009. On December 4, 2012 the United States Senate considered the ratification of the CRPD but fell 5 votes short of the super-majority vote required. The media coverage of the Senate’s failure to ratify the disability treaty has been overwhelming and the CRPD’s Senate leaders remain committed to bringing the disability treaty up in the 113th Congress.

**Why should the U.S. ratify the CRPD when we have the ADA?**

**Ratification of the CRPD Exports U.S. Leadership**

● A broad coalition of more than **760 U.S. disability, civil rights, faith, business, and veteran organizations** support the U.S. ratification of the CRPD holding that American leadership in this arena is critical to the ultimate success of the treaty.

● Ratification is critical to maintaining our leadership role and to eliminating disability discrimination throughout the world and gives the U.S. legitimacy to export the model of the ADA to other countries.

● The absence of U.S. leadership in the CRPD and its Committee of experts matters. Ratification provides the U.S. an opportunity to play an important and expansive role in the development of disability rights around the world without having to change any U.S. laws or add additional costs to its budget.

**VSOs Strongly Support CRPD to Expand Opportunities for Veterans**

●Major veteran service organizations, representing veterans of every generation, support ratification of the CRPD. These groups recognize that our **5.5 million** American veterans with disabilities will have greater opportunities to work, study, and travel abroad as countries implement the CRPD with leadership from the U.S.

● Military families support the CRPD as well. As one CRPD advocate described, having a disability prevented her husband from being able to serve overseas due to the lack of accessibility for her abroad. “Others had the opportunity to transfer overseas. Because of my disability, that was not an option.”

**U.S. Business Supports Ratification of the CRPD to Benefit Business**

● The Chamber of Commerce, the U.S. Business Leadership Network, and the Information Technology Industry Council support U.S. ratification of the CRPD because it benefits business.

● 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. As one business expressed at a Senate briefing by IBM, Adobe, and other key business leaders, “Investment follows opportunity. And to the extent we can make these technologies available on a worldwide basis, that's a bigger market and more opportunity for companies to deliver their products into the world.”

**CRPD Ratification Improves Global Accessibity**

● 4 out of 10 American travelers are estimated to be people with disabilities and their companions yet they still face constant barriers and discrimination abroad.

● Students with disabilities represent less than 4% of students that choose to travel abroad.

● Not ratifying the disability treaty is hindering the United States’ ability to provide expertise to many countries seeking to bring their standards of access for persons with disabilities up to those of the United States, which directly affects Americans with disabilities living, working, and traveling abroad.

● By ratifying the CRPD, the U.S. will offer decades of honed technical expertise to reduce barriers globally and ensure that Americans who travel and study abroad have the same access they enjoy here.

**CRPD Ratification Ensures Humane and Moral Treatment**

● 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.

● The reason U.S. persuasion, moral authority, and leadership can have such an impact on other countries through the CRPD is because of the stark discrimination that still exists in many parts of the world.

● U.S. leadership in fighting against discrimination against persons with disabilities such as infanticide and forced exclusion – and teaching about our example of an inclusive society – can make an immense difference.

**U.S Ratification of the CRPD Has Strong Bipartisan Support**

● Republican leaders of disability legislation support ratification of the CRPD including former President George

H.W. Bush, former Senator Bob Dole, former Attorney General Dick Thornburgh and former White House Counsel

C. Boyden Gray.

● Senators McCain (R-AZ) and Barrasso (R-WY) led the treaty ratification effort with Senators Kerry

(D-MA), Durbin (D-IL), and Harkin (D-IA) in the 112th Congress under shared values of independence, respect, and dignity for all people with disabilities. This bipartisanship leadership for the CRPD continues in the 113th Congress, beginning in January 2013.

**QUICK STATS ABOUT THE WORLD’S LARGEST MINORITY**

* **57.8 million** Americans have one or more disabilities
* **5.5 million** American veterans are people with disabilities
* **1 billion** people with disabilities around the world
* **80%** of people with disabilities live in developing countries
* **1 in 4** of today’s 20 year olds will be disabled before they retire
* **80%** of people with disabilities live in isolated rural areas

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**The TRUTH about**

**the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Introduction**

The CRPD is the first international treaty to address disability rights and was inspired by the leadership of the U.S. in enacting the Americans with Disabilities Act. This treaty will extend the values of the ADA abroad and improve access for Americans with disabilities, including veterans, who live, work, or travel abroad. U.S. ratification of the CRPD costs no additional funds and will require no change to U.S. law. Over 600 American disability organizations, 22 veterans service organizations, and 39 faith organizations support the CRPD.

The disability community has built strong bipartisan support for the treaty with Senators McCain and Barrasso as leading Republicans and Senators Durbin and Harkin as leading Democrats. Republican leaders and disability champions including President George H.W. Bush and Senator Bob Dole have conveyed their support for the disability treaty to the Senate as well. The purpose of this document is to dispel myths created by opponents of the treaty and to provide factual information in regards to each of the issues.

**MYTH: Ratification of the CRPD will infringe upon U.S. sovereignty.**

**FACTS:**

* Ratification of the CRPD will not result in any international authority over U.S. law.
* Ratification will require the U.S. to submit periodic reports, as it already does for numerous human rights treaties it has ratified, and ratification will allow the U.S. to participate in an annual discussion about disability rights globally. With adoption of the recommended Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations (RUDs), ratification of the treaty will not require any changes in any U.S. law or policy nor relinquish any authority whatsoever over U.S. law.
* The U.S. is party to over 10,000 treaties and international agreements, through which the U.S. has strengthened its position as a global leader, not weakened it.

**MYTH: Ratification of the CRPD will make it binding domestic law and will create opportunities for new lawsuits.**

**FACTS:**

* The treaty package includes a traditional declaration that it is non self-executing, meaning that the treaty is not judicially enforceable and does not create a cause of action in courts in the United States.
* The United States Supreme Court in ***Medellin v. Texas*** held that while a treaty may constitute an international commitment, it is not binding domestic lawunless Congress has enacted statutes implementing it or the treaty itself conveys an intention that it be “self-executing” and is ratified on that basis.

**MYTH:** **Ratification of the treaty will put a UN Committee of experts in charge of U.S. law.**

**FACTS:** The Committee created by the treaty, composed of 18 disability experts, may only provide advice and make recommendations to parties of the treaty. The U.S. is not required to follow any such advice or recommendations.

**MYTH:** **Ratification of the CRPD will harm parental rights of parents with children with disabilities and would impair the right to home school.**

**FACTS:**

* The CRPD **PROTECTS** parental rights and highlights the important role of parents in raising children with disabilities. In fact the treaty requires that “(i)n no case shall a child be separated from parents on the basis of a disability of either the child or one or both of the parents.”
* The two proposed reservations on federalism and private conduct provide additional protection to parental authorities, ensuring that state and federal disability law and protections are fully preserved including laws providing the parental right to home school one’s child.

**MYTH:** **The CRPD aims to endorse abortion rights and abortion funding around the world.**

**FACTS:**

* The CRPD does **NOT** address abortion or other health practices. It addresses the right of people with disabilities to have the same rights as others. Nations that both permit and outlaw abortion are party to the CRPD.
* The treaty package before the Senate states clearly that “Article 23(1) **does not address** abortion or any other particular health service. The convention **does not affect** U.S. law with regard to abortion… Article 25 is a nondiscrimination provision and does not address the matter of abortion.” The CRPD simply provides that health procedures provided under domestic law be provided to individuals with disabilities on a nondiscriminatory basis. This is already guaranteed under U.S. law.
* The treaty **DOES** confirm the value that every person with a disability has the right to life (Article 10).

**MYTH:** **Ratification of the CRPD will change the definition of “disability” and other terms in U.S. law.**

**FACTS:**

* The CRPD offers a broad framework of values that countries can implement through their own domestic legislation and policies. The treaty does not provide a definition of disability so that countries can apply their own domestic definitions. The treaty package presented to the Senate includes an understanding that the terms “disability” and “persons with disabilities” are to be defined under U.S. law.

**MYTH: RUDs are not enough to protect the U.S. from treaty obligations.**

**FACTS:**

* As reflected in the Rules of the Senate, the Senate reserves the right, pursuant to the Constitution of the United States, to include treaty reservations in its advice and consent to ratification. Furthermore, the President cannot proceed to ratify a treaty without giving effect to the RUDs approved by the Senate.

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**CRPD: Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations**

The Disability Treaty reflects current U.S. legislation, like the Americans with Disabilities Act, to ensure the rights of people with disabilities. Most provisions of the treaty are consistent with current U.S. legislation. In those situations where existing U.S. law is not consistent with the CRPD, the U.S. has two choices: ratify the treaty as it is and make conforming changes to U.S. law or ratify the treaty subject to Reservations, Understandings, or Declarations (RUDs). RUDs are used by countries in ratifying treaties to exempt themselves from particular provisions in a treaty, or to describe how they interpret specific language in a treaty. For example, where U.S. law, such as the ADA, is different from a treaty provision, the U.S. may decide to take a Reservation with respect to this particular provision. Using this clause, ratifying the treaty would *not* require changes to current U.S. law.

In sending the Disabilities Treaty to the U.S. Senate, the Obama Administration attached a series of nine RUDs to the treaty. With these RUDs, the U.S. is able to ratify the treaty without requiring any new changes to U.S. law and without any new outlays of funds. U.S. Senators, during Senate Foreign Relations Committee markup and before a full Senate floor vote, can add or amend the current RUD package.

**Summary of CRPD RUDs proposed by the Administration:**

**May 17, 2012**

**RESERVATIONS**

**Definition: A reservation is a legal condition added to a treaty to exempt a party from a particular provision.**

1. **Federalism** - The Federalism Reservation ensures that U.S. obligations under the treaty are implemented in a manner consistent with the allocation of authority between the federal government and the states. It limits U.S. obligations in areas that are the sole domain of the States.
2. **Private Conduct** - The Private Action Reservation recognizes that the U.S. Constitution and domestic law do not reach certain private actions and limits U.S. obligations under the treaty to be coextensive with U.S. federal domestic law. For example, employers with fewer than 15 employees, which are exempt under the ADA, would not be covered by the treaty, as ratified.
3. **Definition of Torture** - The Torture Reservation ensures that U.S. treaty obligations under the CRPD relating to prohibitions against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are the same as those undertaken by the U.S. under other ratified treaties, including the Convention against Torture.

**UNDERSTANDINGS**

**Definition: Understandings are legal conditions used to clarify how a provision of the treaty will be understood according to a party’s own legal framework.**

1. **1st Amendment** - Treaty will be implemented in manner consistent with the freedoms of speech and association protected by First Amendment.
2. **Economic & Cultural Rights** - To the extent that this treaty can be read to establish what are called economic, social and cultural rights (right to health care, right to water, etc.), the U.S. recognizes that its obligations under the treaty are those of nondiscrimination and that the treaty requires that it will guarantee persons with disabilities rights under U.S. law to the same extent such rights are recognized with regard to persons without disabilities and will do so on a nondiscriminatory basis.
3. **Equal Employment Opportunity** - The U.S. understands that Article 27 provides for equal pay for equal work, but does not require adoption of a comparable worth framework, and that existing U.S. law provides the basis for this guarantee.
4. **Application to Military** - Right to equal employment opportunity does not affect hiring, promotion, or other terms and conditions for uniformed employees of the U.S. military departments.
5. **Definition of Disability** - The treaty does not include a definition of disability but “recognizes” in the preamble that it is an evolving concept that results from the interaction between a person’s impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinder full and effective participation in society. This understanding makes clear that existing U.S. law on the definition of disability will be used to define disability for implementation of the treaty.

**DECLARATION**

**Definition: Declarations are legal conditions used to clarify how a provision of the treaty will be interpreted by a party in accordance with all other parties to the treaty (whereas understandings are specific to a party’s own legal framework, a declaration states a party’s general understanding as to the global interpretation of a provision or provisions)**

1. **Non Self-Executing** - As with other U.S. treaties, this declaration clarifies that the treaty is not self-executing, which means that the treaty does not itself give rise to individually enforceable rights and cannot be directly enforced by U.S. courts.

**World Calls on United States to Ratify CRPD**

[The] USA significantly influences global Human Rights trends [….] The ratification of the CRPD by the United States Government shall sway the ratification of the CRPD by UN member states that have not done so on one hand, and shall also promote effective inclusion of PWDs in international, national and local development processes on the other […].

Mwesigwa Martin Babu, Kampala Uganda (East Africa), newly elected member of UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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U.S. ratification of the CRPD compels those of us who care about disability rights in Trinidad and Tobago to redouble our efforts to ratify the Convention. The U.S. disability rights laws are the standard bearer and the fact that the United States Senate is taking steps to ratify the CRPD is further evidence of the importance of this treaty.

Debbie McKell, Trinidad and Tobago Paralympic Committee

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The government of Ethiopia has ratified the Convention but is slow to implement its provisions. Whenever I suggest to government officials that American expertise […] would be useful to the Ethiopian government, I'm invariably asked the question "but (you) haven't ratified the Convention, have you?" Ratification of the CRPD would demonstrate to the world our commitment and encourage other countries to follow our example.

Bob Ransom, Senior Advisor, Ethiopian Center for Disability and Development (ECDD), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

\*\*\*

The United States of America has always influenced what happens in countries of the Caribbean […].  History shows that ideas or concepts that have become popular or accepted in the USA, almost always automatically become the same in the countries of the Caribbean.

Leslie Emanuel, Antigua, Disabled Peoples’ International Regional Development Officer

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U.S. ratification will allow the U.S. to become more of a leader, and be replicated by Chile and other countries in Latin America. U.S. Ratification will also create more awareness of people with disabilities in Chile.

Elvira Quiroz De Pauw, Chile

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The USA has led the world in terms of disability rights legislation and accessibility […]. It will be a great sign of commitment and ongoing leadership if the USA ratifies the CRPD.

Catherine Naughton, Director of International Advocacy and Alliances, CBM, Brussels, Belgium

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The U.S., as a leading country committed to international cooperation in all regions of the world […] would set such an example by ratifying the CRPD, […] and sharing good practices to contributing to its implementation by its partners internationally."

Wanda Muñoz, Mexico, Inclusive Livelihoods and Disability Advisor

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The impact of CRPD's ratification on the U.S. foreign policy and in particular development cooperation policies would […] benefit millions of disabled people the world over.  
  
Javed Abidi, Disabled People's International (DPI), Chairperson

\*\*\*

A ratificación de la CRPD en USA podría darle el impulso necesario al respeto de los derechos humanos de PCD en Guatemala, donde se violan estos derechos impunemente, con increíble frecuencia.

Ratification of the CPRD in the USA could give the necessary impulse with respect to the human rights of people with disabilities in Guatemala, where these rights are constantly violated often with impunity.

Juan José Mendoza Muñoz, Guatemala

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The U.S. ratification will affirm the U.S. commitment to promote and protect the rights of people with disabilities all around the world!

Francesca Piatta, Handicap International Senegal Project's Coordinator.

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Si los EU ratifique la Convención, sería excelente porque […] en los proyectos de desarrollo de USAID sería de gran impacto para las PCD para ser solo receptor de beneficios, sino […] ejecutores de los proyectos  
  
If the U.S. ratifies the CRPD, it would be excellent because […] USAID development projects would have a greater impact for people with disabilities, not just as beneficiaries but also as […] executors of the projects.

Eileen Giron, Executive Director of AGOGIPRI, San Salvador, El Salvador

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**Neglected and Abused Abroad:**

**A Look at the Severe Mistreatment of Individuals with Disabilities Around the World and**

**How the U.S. Can Help**

Created by the International Task Force of the

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities

**September 2013**

**U.S. Experience Protecting the Rights of**

**Individuals with Disabilities**

Laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities are imperative. Without such laws, people with disabilities have been victims of extreme discrimination, abuse, and neglect. In the United States, for example, prior to the creation of laws that now better ensure the rights and safety of people with disabilities, abuse and blatant discrimination was allowed to occur. Large state institutions for individuals with disabilities such as the infamous Willowbrook - a New York State supported institution for people with intellectual disabilities which held over 6,000 residents in a facility meant for only 4,000 - were allowed to exist. In the 1970’s, Willowbrook residents were found naked, held in filthy conditions, and provided with limited chances to interact with others. Residents sat around with nothing to do. One staff member was responsible for 30 to 40 residents, each having a number of needs and behavioral issues.

As a result of the terrible conditions at Willowbrook and other institutions, and the treatment and discrimination faced by people with disabilities, a number of laws were passed in the United States to protect the rights of people with disabilities. These laws included the Rehabilitation Actin 1973, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) in 1975, and the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act in 1980. As part of the DD Act, Congress created the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) system to investigate institutions to ensure the safety of individuals with disabilities, and to provide legal advocacy to protect their rights.

Following passage of these early disability rights laws, the United States made progress to better ensure the equal treatment of Americans with disabilities and improve the lives of those living in institutions. The key law developed in the United States to protect the rights of people with disabilities is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which represents a bill of rights for Americans with disabilities. The ADA was enacted by Congress with overwhelming support from both parties and signed into law by President George H.W. Bush on July 26, 1990. To ensure that the intent of the original Act would be fulfilled, in 2008 Congress overwhelmingly passed, with unanimous support in the U.S. Senate, the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act. The ADA requires that people with disabilities be given the same opportunities as others without disabilities in employment, public programs, public accommodations, and public transportation.

In 1999, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* (527 U.S. 581) that the ADA requires that people with disabilities be provided services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. The decision in *Olmstead* requires states across the United States to provide appropriate services and supports in the community so that children and adults with disabilities are not unnecessary institutionalized in order to receive these services, and can live as equal members in the community. As Justice Ginsburg of the Supreme Court wrote, “confinement in an institution severely diminishes the everyday life activities of individuals, including family relations, social contacts, work options, economic independence, educational advancement, and cultural enrichment.” Now in the United States unnecessary confinement in an institution is “discrimination” against people with disabilities and a violation of their civil rights.

The passage of laws in the United States over the past forty years have created better protections, greater rights, and a more dignified standard of living for people with disabilities. Though problems still exist in America for people with disabilities and current laws need to be diligently enforced, U.S. laws have set the world standard for protecting the rights of people with disabilities.

As the United States actively works towards ensuring basic human rights for U.S. citizens and legal residents with disabilities, and for foreign tourists with disabilities visiting the United States, people with disabilities in countries around the world continue to face harsh mistreatment and abuse which their governments either fail or refuse to prevent. This report highlights just a few examples of the serious abuse, neglect, discrimination, and unequal treatment of people with disabilities that persist in other countries. Some of these examples bring to mind the horrific conditions found in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s, before enactment of U.S. civil rights laws to protect individuals with disabilities.

Preventing the abuse and mistreatment of individuals with disabilities highlighted in this report is possible by global adherence to the standards of the **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. Commonly called the “CRPD,” this disability rights treaty applies the same human and civil rights standards which exist in the United States to nations which adopt the treaty. The United States has not ratified the CRPD.

At the end of World War II, the United States became a leader in the world promoting political and civil rights, the rule of law, democracy, and the protection of personal security and freedom. Since the 1970s, and more recently with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the United States also became a leader in adopting laws to protect individuals with disabilities. Just as the United States ratified treaties on civil and political rights, the elimination of racial discrimination, and others, the United States needs to ratify the CRPD. People with disabilities deserve the same level of support and leadership – and no less - from the United States on disability rights as the United States has provided for the realization of other human rights.

**About CCD:** The [Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities](http://www.c-c-d.org/) (CCD) is a coalition of approximately 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 [CCD International Task Force](http://www.c-c-d.org/rubriques.php?rub=taskforce.php&id_task=7) envisions a global society in which individuals with disabilities have the rights, freedoms, and opportunities to fully participate in all aspects of civic life and to exercise individual decisions concerning their own lives. Click on the icon to the left or here to visit the [Task Force website](http://www.c-c-d.org/rubriques.php?rub=taskforce.php&id_task=7).

**Abuse and Mistreatment of People with Disabilities across the World and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Below are eight examples of severe abuse and discrimination of individuals with disabilities from different regions of the world reported within just the last decade. Certainly many more incidents of mistreatment go uninvestigated and unreported. The **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)** requires nations who have accepted or “ratified” the treaty to work towards protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities in their countries.

Currently, 133 nations and the European Union have ratified the CRPD. By accepting the CRPD, these nations agree to work together to protect the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities.

Human rights, like those in the CRPD, are realized when nations encourage, support, and in some cases work to pressure other nations to adhere to the rights contained in a treaty. In other words, a nation which has ratified a human rights treaty works - through offers of technical assistance, diplomatic discussion, and other persuasive means - to influence another nation which has ratified the same human rights treaty to uphold its’ obligations. No international court, body, or committee can force a country to follow obligations under most human rights treaties. This includes the CRPD, since no international court or committee can force a nation to adhere to the disability rights in the treaty. It is, however, through cooperative assistance among nations, diplomatic pressure as necessary, and public exposure of abuses if required, that rights under the CRPD can and will be realized. The United States, which is years if not decades ahead of most other nations in creating rights and protecting the treatment of individuals with disabilities, has diminished ability to influence other nations to follow the CRPD until ratified by the U.S. Senate.

The CRPD is less than 10 years old, and countries which have adopted the treaty are working to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. For example, in Peru the national congress approved a new disability law in line with the CRPD which includes a right to integrated education for individuals with disabilities and an obligation that transportation be accessible (*source:* [*www.cbm.org/Peruvian-Congress-approves-disability-law-372083.php*](http://www.cbm.org/Peruvian-Congress-approves-disability-law-372083.php)*)*. In India, upon ratification of the CRPD, the country undertook a complete rewrite of laws protecting people with disabilities. Instead of the previous charity-based legal protections, the new law in India now seeks to empower people with disabilities and ensure they can live independent and productive lives (*source:* [www.criticaltwenties.in/lawthejudiciary/drafting-indias-new-law-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities](http://www.criticaltwenties.in/lawthejudiciary/drafting-indias-new-law-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities)). Similarly in Kenya, though problems still exist, a new 2010 constitution explicitly prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities under the law where such previous protections did not exist (*source:* [drpi.research.yorku.ca/Africa/resources/EACDisabilityPolicy/Page2/Part3](http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/Africa/resources/EACDisabilityPolicy/Page2/Part3)).

In some counties which have ratified the CRPD, however, conditions have not yet improved and need the leadership of the United States. Below are just a few examples.

**Ghana**

[](http://www.google.com/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=maps%20of%20ghana%20in%20africa&source=images&cd=&docid=QrFtpeQcXj-UNM&tbnid=TK10iNRkvCVRZM:&ved=0CAUQjRw&url=http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ghana_in_Africa_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg&ei=-DDwUdmKGpfH4AOkh4GwAw&bvm=bv.49641647,d.dmg&psig=AFQjCNHCRYyMQI_KLa4dlSOmHN_Q-884jQ&ust=1374782067196872)Ghana ratified the CRPD in 2012, but Ghanaian citizens with disabilities still face many violations of their basic human rights. For example, people with mental illness suffer from severe abuse at psychiatric hospitals and so-called “healing centers” or “prayer camps.” While at these healing centers, many individuals with mental disabilities are chained to trees and even denied water as part of the “healing.”

According to a Human Rights Watch report, about 1,000 residents live in squalid, overcrowded quarters in Ghana's three psychiatric hospitals. Patients face physical and verbal abuse, and some are given electroshock therapy without anesthesia because, according to the head of one hospital, “we don’t have a machine and personnel.” The abuse is even worse in healing centers, which lack government oversight. Many people with mental disabilities are sent to the camps, usually by their family members to be "cured" by self-proclaimed prophets through miracles, prayer, and fasting. In most prayer camps, residents are only allowed to leave when the prophet deems them healed. At the Mount Horeb Prayer Camp in 2012, according to Human Rights Watch, about 120 of the 135 residents were chained to trees or to the walls inside cell-like rooms, 24 hours a day, sometimes for months at a time. Most of the chains measured only a few yards long. They bathed, defecated, urinated, changed sanitary towels, ate, and slept on the spot where they were chained.

Articles 15 and 16 of the CRPD require that nations which adopt the treaty take measures to prevent the torture, abuse, and inhuman and degrading treatment of individuals with disabilities. Fortunately in the United States, such abuse would violate a number of federal criminal and civil statutes, as well as state laws. If the United States ratified the CRPD, it could pressure and work with countries like Ghana to uphold their commitment to ensure the rights of persons with mental disabilities are respected under Articles 15 and 16.

*Source:* Human Rights Watch (Medi Ssengooba). *‘Like a Death Sentence’: Abuses against Persons with Mental Disabilities in Ghana.* October 2, 2012. *Available at:* [www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/02/death-sentence](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2012/10/02/death-sentence).

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6a/Kenya_in_Africa_(disputed_hatched)_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg)**Kenya**

After a 10 year old Kenyan girl with a disability was raped, her mother filed a police report. When attempting to file the report, the mother was told by the police that “such cases cannot be properly supported in court- as the girl is deaf and disabled… [and] cannot be able to give evidence in court.” When the case eventually reached the court, it could not be heard because sign language interpreters were not available to assist. Kenya ratified the CRPD in 2008.

Article 5 of the CRPD requires a nation to recognize that individuals with disabilities are entitled to equal protection under the law. Article 13 of the CRPD requires a nation to provide equal access to the justice system for all people with disabilities. Under Article 13 a nation also needs to provide accommodations so that a person with a disability, whether a victim or a witness, can participate effectively in the justice process. Article 16 of the treaty requires proper investigations and prosecution of violence against and exploitation of individuals with disabilities.

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits unequal treatment of people with disabilities. United States ratification of the CRPD would allow the U.S. to raise with the Kenyan government the failure to provide children, like the one in this case, and her family with equal access to the justice system. The United States could also share years of expertise in providing equal access to justice to help Kenya prevent future violations of Articles 5, 13, and 16.

*Source:* Serges Alain Djoyou Kamga, Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria.  *The Rights of Women With Disabilities in Africa: Does the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa Offer Any Hope?* February 2011. *Available at:* [*www.centerwomenpolicy.org*](http://www.centerwomenpolicy.org)*.*

**Mexico**

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/01/Mexico_in_North_America_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg)A report by Disability Rights International and Mexico’s Commission for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights contains a number of stories of abuse and neglect of persons with mental and intellectual disabilities. Investigators found patients lying naked or half clothed on concrete floors at two psychiatric hospitals. The smell of human waste at one facility was overwhelming. Investigators saw patients urinate on the floor and walk around in the same spot, and observed a patient pick-up and lick a food container from an open sewer while staff failed to intervene. At another facility, a patient was seen tied to a bench and unable to walk to the bathroom, while an elderly woman in a wheelchair was allowed to sit in her own waste.

“The government of Mexico has no record as to how many people are detained in its psychiatric facilities, orphanages, shelters, and other institutions for people with disabilities.” – Report from Disability Rights International

Investigators also reported on children with intellectual disabilities being abandoned at a private facility without any documentation on their diagnosis or even their names. Two girls at the facility reported having to work without pay, and were provided no services to be able to leave the house.

Articles 16 and 17 of the disability rights treaty require a nation to work to protect individuals with disabilities from abuse, and to respect their physical and mental integrity. Mexico has ratified the CRPD. Major media outlets in the United States for over a decade have reported on the mistreatment of people with disabilities in Mexico, but also recognized that the United States does not have a tool to effectively share information about deinstitutionalization techniques with Mexico. The CRPD is that tool.

By ratifying the treaty, United States diplomats could more easily raise the mistreatment of individuals with mental and intellectual disabilities with Mexico, and offer technical assistance on providing treatment and services to individuals in the community. Even prior to the Supreme Court decision in *Olmstead*, states around the United States gained significant experience in providing services and supports to people with disabilities outside of the institution, experience which could be shared with Mexico as a CRPD treaty partner.

*Source:* Disability Rights International and Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos. *Abandoned & Disappeared: Mexico’s Segregation and Abuse of Children and Adults with Disabilities.* June 2011. *Available at:* www.disabilityrightsintl.org/media-gallery/our-reports-publications/.

**Paraguay**

****[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3b/Paraguay_in_South_America_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg)In 2003, disability rights investigators found two teenage boys with disabilities in an institution who for more than four years had been locked in six-by-six foot isolation cells, naked, and without access to bathrooms. According to the investigators, “the cells reeked of urine and feces, and the cell walls were smeared with excrement. Each boy spent approximately four hours every other day in an outdoor pen, which was littered with human excrement, garbage, and broken glass.” In addition, another 458 people were found detained in unclean institutions without medical, dental, and psychiatric support.

An individual with a mental disability locked in a cell in Paraguay. *Photo by Eugene Richards, Many Voices, Inc., courtesy of Disability Rights International.*

Paraguay ratified the CRPD in 2008. Proper implementation of the CRPD can ensure that maltreatment of this kind no longer happens to children with disabilities in Paraguay. Under Article 7 of the CRPD, a nation agrees to ensure children with disabilities enjoy the same basic human rights and fundamental freedoms as children without disabilities. Articles 15, 16, and 17 of the treaty require a nation to work to prevent abuse and mistreatment, and to protect the physical integrity of individuals with disabilities. In the United States, laws such as the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, the Protection and Advocacy of Individuals with Mental Illness Act, and state and federal laws prohibit and seek to prevent such horrible mistreatment. Agencies such as the U.S. Department of Justice, state Protection and Advocacy agencies, and other state and local agencies investigate, enforce the law, and attempt to prevent this type of abuse. With ratification of the CRPD, the United States could offer Paraguay, as an equal treaty partner, assistance based on decades of experience protecting persons with disabilities from abuse and neglect.

*Source:* Disability Rights International. *Disability Rights International’s Work in Paraguay*. October 2013. *Available at*: [www.disabilityrightsintl.org/work/country-projects/paraguay/](http://www.disabilityrightsintl.org/work/country-projects/paraguay/).

**Russia**

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f5/Russia_in_Asia_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg)In Russia many people with disabilities are like prisoners inside their own homes, unable to go outside because of a lack of basic accessible facilities in cities and towns. A man from Moscow paralyzed from the waist down and who uses a wheelchair has faced such struggles throughout his life. In one incident after answering a knock on the door he was attacked and dragged from his wheelchair. Fearing further attack, and because the front door of his apartment is too narrow for a wheelchair to go through, he has not left his apartment for ten years. Other disability advocates in Russia report that many people with disabilities rarely leave their homes because of inaccessible buildings, public sidewalks without curb cuts, and public transportation that is not accessible.

Russia ratified the CRPD in 2012. Under Article 9(1)(a) of the treaty, nations must work to provide “buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces” accessible to individuals with disabilities. Articles 19 and 20 call on nations to recognize the equal rights of persons with disabilities to live independently in the community. The isolation of individuals with disabilities in Russia illustrates that there is still much to be done in that nation.

In the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act require equal access to public services for people with disabilities. Through ratification of the CRPD, the United States could, as an equal treaty partner, offer to assist Russia adhere to the accessibility standards in the CRPD, the same standards set in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

*Source:* BBC (Richard Galpin). *Russia's Disabled Suffer Neglect and Abuse*. October 12, 2009. *Available at:* [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8302633.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8302633.stm); and *Campaigning for Disabled Russians* (video). *Available at:* [news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8299325.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8299325.stm).

**Rwanda**

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f6/Rwanda_in_Africa_(-mini_map_-rivers).svg)A 30-year-old genocide survivor with a mental disability was arrested by the police for arguing with people who wanted to put him in chains. The individual lost his job in the army because of, and was known in his village to have, a mental disability. Rwanda ratified the CRPD in 2008, yet on January 19, 2013 the man was subjected to severe abuse by the police. After getting into an argument and altercation with neighbors, a crowd started beating him, chained his legs and arms, and the police took him to a police station.

Following the arrest, the man was held in a dark cell for almost three weeks. His arms and legs were chained until becoming infected. The police ignored the recommendation of a nurse to take him for medical treatment, and when treatment was finally sought ten days later, a psychiatric hospital refused to admit him. Eventually the man was taken to another hospital, where both his arms were amputated because of the infection from the restraints. Charges have been brought against the police and other officials. With proper implementation of the CRPD, especially Articles 15 and 16, as well as Article 13(2) which requires appropriate training of police and prison officials on disability issues, such horrific abuse of individuals with disabilities can be prevented.

Many police forces around the United States are experts on how to handle issues involving people with mental disabilities and ensure compliance with U.S. laws. If the United States ratifies the CRPD, it can more easily approach Rwanda about such human rights abuses, and provide technical assistance to police on how to assist individuals with mental disabilities in crisis situations.

*Source:* National Organization of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry. *Torture of Person with Disability in Rwanda*. March 2013. *Available at:* [www.panusp.org/wnusp-statement-on-un-sr-torture-mendez-report-of-4-march-2013](http://www.panusp.org/wnusp-statement-on-un-sr-torture-mendez-report-of-4-march-2013).

**Serbia**

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7e/Serbia_in_Europe_(-rivers_-mini_map).svg)Horrendous instances of injustice and ill-treatment of persons with disabilities in institutions in Serbia have been reported since 2007. A report by disability rights investigators found that in one government institution, rows upon rows of young people diagnosed with Down Syndrome were tied to their beds or cribs. One man with Down Syndrome, twenty-one at the time of the report, was said to have been restrained for eleven years. Other young people and adults were confined to their beds with labels describing various disabilities such as “blindness, deafness, cerebral palsy, hydrocephaly and mental retardation.” The lights in the institution remain off most of the time leaving the room dark, even in the middle of the day. There is usually only one staff member for 25 people, with no stimulation for the patients for a better quality of life.

By joining over a hundred nations, including most of Europe, and North and South America in ratifying the CRPD, the United States would be in a much stronger position to hold Serbia responsible to adhere to Articles 7, 15, and 16 of the treaty which prohibits the neglect, mistreatment, and torture of individuals and children with disabilities. United States ratification would also show the world that the United States will not tolerate the abuse of children with disabilities.

*Sources:* Disability Rights International. *Serbia, Torment not Treatment: Serbia’s Segregation and Abuse of Children and Adults with Disabilities*. November 2007. *Available at:* [www.disabilityrightsintl.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Serbia-rep-english.pdf](http://www.disabilityrightsintl.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Serbia-rep-english.pdf). Dan Bilefsky. *Mentally Ill in Serbia Are Abused, Report Says*, November 14, 2007. *Available at:* [www.nytimes.com/2007/11/14/world/europe/14serbia.html?\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/14/world/europe/14serbia.html?_r=0).

**Turkey**

[](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/55/Turkey_in_Europe_(-rivers_-mini_map).svg)It is common practice in Turkey’s mental health system to use electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) on persons with mental disabilities in its “unmodified” form without anesthesia, muscle relaxants, or oxygenation. The practice of unmodified ECT creates a climate of fear that permeates public psychiatric facilities and scares many patients from any treatment or care. One 28 year old former psychiatric patient subjected to “unmodified” ECT described it as the most painful thing he had ever experienced. The man was held down, had cotton put in his mouth, and got a jolt of 70 to 110 volts. He said “I felt like dying.” Turkey could prevent such abusive practices by adhering to the CRPD which it ratified in 2009.

For more information on the violations and work to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in countries across the world, visit the [Disability Rights International](http://www.disabilityrightsintl.org/) website.

Under Article 15 of the CRPD a nation agrees to work to ensure people with disabilities are free from torture or cruel and inhuman treatment. By ratifying the CRPD, the United States can both pressure Turkey to stop using “unmodified” ECT, and serve as a guide for Turkey as they work to uphold standards to provide proper treatment for their citizens with disabilities.

*Source:* Disability Rights International. *Behind Closed Doors: Human Rights Abuses in the Psychiatric Facilities, Orphanages and Rehabilitation Centers of Turkey.* September 26, 2005. *Available at:* [www.disabilityrightsintl.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/turkey-final-9-26-05.pdf](http://www.disabilityrightsintl.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/turkey-final-9-26-05.pdf).

**The Experience of an American Student who is Deaf**

**Traveling to Ghana**

*When a nation properly adheres to the CRPD, accessibility in public transportation, public facilities, and other public spaces should improve, benefiting individuals with disabilities traveling to that nation. Read below about the difficulties faced by Anais Keenon, a student in International Development at Gallaudet University who is deaf and traveled to study in Ghana during the summer of 2011. From the moment she arrived she faced a multitude of obstacles because of her deafness, showing that Ghana, which has ratified the treaty, needs more motivation and support to adhere to the treaty.*

“When I landed at Kotoka International Airport in Accra, there were no signs or written instructions for me to see and follow when going through customs, so I struggled to figure out the paperwork and to communicate with the airport staff. Communication struggles continued because public transportation systems had no accessible features for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.” Although Ms. Keenon tried to find ways to communicate using signs or hand gestures, she realized “most people had no clue what was happening and backed away from me; eventually I had to stop using signs in public.” Further complicating Ms. Keenon’s experience was the fact that neither American Sign Language (ASL) nor Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) interpreters were available for hire, thereby making it necessary for important information to be constantly repeated.

Though Ms. Keenon faced many difficult experiences because of her deafness, she notes “I was only a visitor - life is beyond difficult for most deaf Ghanaians.” During interviews with Ghanaians who are deaf, Ms. Keenon learned of their daily challenges. For example: “Two deaf men I met, who were in their early 20s, couldn't spell - which is crucial for communication in ASL or GSL.” This problem is similar to that of many Ghanaians who are deaf, whom Ms. Keenon discerned “genuinely, desperately wanted a ‘real’ education, but they were being taught how to make brooms and farm instead.” In fact, Ms. Keenon says that most Ghanaians do not think people who are deaf “can marry, have children, drive cars, or be ‘normal.’”

Since her travels, Ghana has ratified the CRPD. If the U.S. ratifies, Ms. Keenon believes this will be “a strong indication that Ghana will need to start integrating its citizens with disabilities, and promote more accessible options.” As mentioned throughout this report, by ratifying the CRPD, under international human rights law, the United States would be in a much stronger position to persuade, and if necessary pressure, Ghana and other nations which have adopted the CRPD to follow the provisions of the treaty. As Ms. Keenon asserts: “if Ghana actually starts following the CRPD treaty, it will make a world of difference not only for Ghanaians with disabilities but for tourists with disabilities. I should have the same right as other American citizens to fully enjoy the cultural experiences and treasures of different countries.”

**How Would United States Ratification of the CRPD Encourage Other Nations to Protect the Rights of People with Disabilities?**

Under international law, a human rights treaty is an agreement among nations. By accepting or “ratifying” a human rights treaty, a nation says its’ government will uphold the rights in the treaty for those who are in that nation’s territory. By ratifying a treaty, a nation also expects other nations which have adopted the treaty to uphold those rights within that nation’s borders. A nation which accepts a human rights treaty is in a much better position under international law to provide leadership, training, technical assistance, and if necessary apply pressure, to another nation to keep their agreement to protect the rights of its citizens and those visiting the country.

Photo of an emaciated teenager, possibly crying, lying naked on a bed at an adult psychiatric facility in Romania.  The United States has ratified a number of international human rights treaties including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, known as the “ICCPR” in 1992; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 1994; and in 2002 two Protocols prohibiting child prostitution, pornography and the selling of children, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict. All of these treaties were approved unanimously by members of both parties in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. President George H.W. Bush supported the ICCPR, while Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush supported the two Protocols concerning children. To be ratified in the United States, two-thirds of the U.S. Senate, or 67 Senators, must vote to adopt a treaty. As said before, the United States has not yet ratified the CRPD.

An emaciated teenager found by Disability Rights International (then known as Mental Disability Rights International) at an adult psychiatric facility in Romania. *Photo by Eric Rosenthal, courtesy of Disability Rights International.*

By adopting the CRPD, the United States can better influence other CRPD nations to live up to their agreement to protect individuals with disabilities. Once ratified, the United States can become a leader and use much stronger diplomatic pressure in relations with the 133 nations[[7]](#footnote-7) which currently have ratified the CRPD, to address any mistreatment of individuals with disabilities, and seek improvements in the conditions of their lives. Offers of technical assistance by the United States, for example, on how to protect and provide enforcement for the rights of peoples with disabilities, will be more readily accepted by other nations with the United States as a treaty partner. Once the CRPD is ratified, the United States can speak more strongly on the international stage about the treatment of people with disabilities with other nations which have adopted the treaty.

**Conclusion**

The abuse, mistreatment, and neglect of people with disabilities is a world-wide problem - similar to what United States citizens with disabilities experienced during much of the last century. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is designed to address these horrific situations. By ratifying the CRPD, the United States can better assist the international community to protect the rights and improve the lives of persons with disabilities.

* **Support the Rights of Individuals with Disabilities Across the World to be Free From Abuse**
* **Support the Equal Rights of Individuals with Disabilities Across the World**
* **Give the United States the tools necessary to Fight for the Just and Equal Treatment of Individuals with Disabilities Across the World**
* **Call for United States Ratification of the CRPD!**

1. World Health Organization and the World Bank, Summary: World Report on Disability, 29 (2011). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Handicap International *A Handbook on the Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: Understanding the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,* 18 (2010) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [hereafter CRPD] at art. 34 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. CRPD at art. 35 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. CRPD at art. 40 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. CRPD at art. 36 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The number of nations and the European Union which have ratified the CRPD as of August 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)