

May 1, 2008

Dear Member of Congress:

As faith-based organizations committed to protecting the rights of people with disabilities, we urge Congress to pass the ADA Restoration Act of 2007 (H.R. 3195/S. 1881). This bill is essential to protect people with disabilities from discrimination and to correct the rollback of civil rights that has occurred since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990. As this bipartisan bill moves through Congress, we strongly encourage you to give it your full support.

The ADA promised to be a vital means of protecting the livelihoods of people with disabilities who faced discrimination. Since its enactment, courts have narrowed the definition of disability to the point that the law often harms the very individuals it was designed to protect. The ADA Restoration Act attempts to close loopholes in the ADA's workplace provisions by clearly redefining the term "disability" to apply to any individual with a real or perceived physical or mental impairment. The definition of disability would also be restored to be in accordance with the intent of the original law, and would ensure that individuals with conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, hearing loss, learning disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities who utilize "mitigating measures" such as prescription drugs, prosthetics, and hearing aids, will be protected. To encourage the courts to stop construing disability legislation narrowly and in defiance of the spirit of the law, the bill states that its provisions should be broadly construed to advance their remedial purpose.

Sacred texts from our diverse faith traditions agree upon the inherent value and sacredness of every human being, regardless of physical or mental ability. Our traditions teach us of our moral obligation to provide assistance to those in need, ensuring equal access for all people and helping facilitate the full participation of individuals with disabilities in our communities. We are committed to eradicating all forms of discrimination and intolerance, which alienate individuals and divide our society. We believe that the restoration of civil rights to the disabled community is of crucial importance to this struggle.

The right to earn a livelihood is one that should be granted to all people, regardless of physical or mental disability. We urge you to show your support for equal rights by co-sponsoring and supporting the ADA Restoration Act of 2007. If you have any questions about the legislation or this letter, please contact Kate Bigam (Union for Reform Judaism) at (202) 387-2800 or Amy Aarons Rosen (United Jewish Communities) at (202) 736-5871.

Respectfully,

American Islamic Congress
American Jewish Committee
Catholic Charities Disabilities Services
Central Conference of American Rabbis
Disciples Justice Action Network (Disciples
of Christ)
The Episcopal Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hindu American Foundation
Islamic Society of North America
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
Muslim Public Affairs Council
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of
the Good Shepherd

National Council of Jewish Women
NETWORK: A National Catholic
Social Justice Lobby
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Washington Office
The Salvation Army, United States
United Church of Christ, Justice and
Witness Ministries
United Methodist Church, General
Board of Church and Society
Union for Reform Judaism
Unitarian Universalist Association of
Congregations
United Jewish Communities
United States Conference of Catholic
Bishops