



September 10, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senate Majority Leader Reid and Senator Menendez:

As leading U.S. science and engineering organizations, we are writing to express our support for ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities that recently passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. We respectfully request that this treaty be brought to the Senate floor for debate and a vote during the September work session.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides a framework for comprehensively addressing the rights of persons with disabilities, to be implemented by each nation consistent with its own legal and administrative systems. The Convention explicitly recognizes the rights of persons with disabilities to enjoy equal access to medical facilities, education, workplaces, and communications technologies. Furthermore, it calls on nations to support research and development on adaptive goods and services, as well as new assistive technologies; encourages international cooperation in research, facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge, and standards for sharing medical and technological advances; and reiterates the prohibition against medical or scientific experimentation on any person without their free consent.

As organizations representing the research community, we have had a long-standing commitment to increase access to and participation in science and technology by persons with disabilities, and affirming that research and development benefit from intellectual and experiential diversity.

Recently, the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) adopted a [statement](#) strongly urging that the United States ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Several scientific organizations have since either endorsed the AAAS statement or adopted their own, including the American Educational Research Association, the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the American Physical Society, the American Psychological Association, the American Statistical Association, the Consortium of Social Science Associations, the Linguistic Society of America, and Sociologists Without Borders.

The Convention was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2006, following years of global negotiation in which the United States played a key role and the Americans with Disabilities Act served as the model. The U.S. will maintain its leadership role by becoming a party to the treaty. It is to that end that we respectfully request that the treaty be brought to the Senate floor for a vote. Thank you for your consideration.

American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Educational Research Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
American Statistical Association
Association of American Geographers
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council on Undergraduate Research
Linguistic Society of America
Society for Research in Child Development
Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues
Sociologists Without Borders