

Hello, my name is Mackensi Karman and this is Rachel Kunz. We are here with the Religious Action center of Reform Judaism and have come with the congregation BJBE in deerfield. We would like to thank the representative for supporting legislation that empowers The Rights of People with Disabilities.

Around 650 million people in the world live with some sort of disability, making this the worlds largest minority. The Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) makes an effort to bring the world closer to achieving goals of equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. By ratifying the the CRPD this would show people with disabilities a serious commitment to their rights. If this law were to be ratified there would be no change to the law or cost required by the U.S.

In the Torah the book of Leviticus says ,(quote) "You shall not insult the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind".(end quote) Blocks may come in many shapes and or sizes, and by ratifying the CRPD we are taking away the stumbling blocks that are stopping people.

CRPD does not need to affect just people with physical disabilities, but also people who have suffered an illness that left them disabled in ways they would have never expected to be. For example, as you know, Senator Mark Kirk (IL) suffered a stroke 2 years ago, leaving him with what is now considered a disability. It does not mean that his work is done any differently or how he works is not to full ability, it means under CRPD, he and others with disabilities will get the same rights as people without disabilities.

In the bible, Moses had a speech impediment, which did not stop him from being a great leader. Both Rachel and myself can relate as we both have had to overcome learning disabilities. Thankfully, just like God believed in Moses, we are fortunate enough to have the support of our schools, family, and friends to help us reach our full potential. This is an opportunity every person with disabilities must have and why we must continue to to push forward new legislation to address their needs.

Once again, thank to your representative and you for supporting the rights for people with disabilities and for taking time out of your busy day to come and listen to what we have to say. It truly means a lot as this is a very important topic for us and many other individuals. We ask the representative to work with his senate colleagues to support the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Thank you again!