

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 52

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States Government should support the human rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities by pledging support for the drafting and working toward the adoption of a thematic convention on the human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities by the United Nations General Assembly to augment the existing United Nations human rights system, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 10, 2003

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CHAFEE, and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress that the United States Government should support the human rights and dignity of all persons with disabilities by pledging support for the drafting and working toward the adoption of a thematic convention on the human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities by the United Nations General Assembly to augment the existing United Nations human rights system, and for other purposes.

Whereas all people are endowed with an inestimable dignity, which is based on autonomy and self-determination, and which requires that every person be placed at the center of all decisions affecting such person, and the inherent

equality of all people and the ethical requirement of every society to honor and sustain the freedom of any individual with appropriate communal support;

Whereas more than 600,000,000 people have a disability;

Whereas more than two-thirds of all persons with disabilities live in developing countries, and only 2 percent of children with disabilities in the developing world receive any education or rehabilitation;

Whereas during the last 2 decades, a substantial shift has occurred globally in governmental and nongovernmental institutions from an approach of charity toward persons with disabilities to the recognition of the inherent universal human rights of persons with disabilities;

Whereas the United Nations has authoritatively endorsed and helped to advance progress toward realizing the human rights of persons with disabilities, as exemplified by the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 48/96 of December 20, 1993), which are monitored by a United Nations Special Rapporteur;

Whereas because of the slow and uneven progress of ensuring that persons with disabilities enjoy their universal human rights in law and in practice, every society and the international community remain challenged to identify and implement the processes which best protect the dignity of persons with disabilities and which fully implement their inherent human rights;

Whereas greater and more rapid progress must be achieved toward overcoming the relative invisibility of persons with

disabilities in many societies, national laws, and existing international human rights instruments; and

Whereas, accordingly, the United Nations General Assembly in November 2001, adopted an historic resolution to establish an ad hoc committee open to all United Nations member nations to consider proposals for a comprehensive and integral treaty to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—*

3 (1) the United States should play a leading role
4 in the drafting of a thematic United Nations conven-
5 tion that affirms the human rights and dignity of
6 persons with disabilities, and that—

7 (A) is consistent with the spirit of the
8 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the
9 United States Constitution, and other rights en-
10 joyed by United States citizens with disabilities;

11 (B) promotes inclusion, independence, po-
12 litical enfranchisement, and economic self-suffi-
13 ciency of persons with disabilities as
14 foundational requirements for any free and just
15 society; and

16 (C) provides protections that are at least
17 as strong as the rights that are now recognized

1 under international human rights law for other
2 vulnerable populations; and

3 (2) the President should instruct the Secretary
4 of State to send to the United Nations Ad Hoc Com-
5 mittee meetings a United States delegation that in-
6 cludes individuals with disabilities who are recog-
7 nized leaders in the United States disability rights
8 movement.

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