

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer and Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

The COVID-19 pandemic occurring in the United States should be of utmost concern to every lawmaker in the country. We are grateful to the Senate for their leadership as they work to craft and pass the third package of coronavirus-related relief. The undersigned Disability, Civil Rights, Health and Faith-Based organizations write with the following priorities that must be included in the legislation being considered around COVID-19. People with disabilities are, and will be, particularly at risk as COVID-19 spreads across the country, facing high risk of complications and death if exposed to the outbreak and needing to isolate themselves for protection. We urge Congress to focus on people with disabilities, regardless of immigration status, and their needs in legislation in response to the outbreak.

The following represents a non-exhaustive list of the needs that must be addressed for people with disabilities, their families, and the workforce that supports them:

Economic Stimulus and Increased Asset Limits and Benefits

- Economic stimulus should be easily and equitably available to low-income individuals and asset limits for people with disabilities and older adults in Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, SNAP, and other means tested programs should be eliminated or raised so these crucial benefits will not be a risk from the stimulus.
- Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits should be boosted for the duration of the epidemic to help people with disabilities afford the increased costs of health care supplies and medically necessary isolation.

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) in Medicaid

- Increase FMAP match beyond the 6.2 bump to ensure that Medicaid and state governments have the resources they need to ensure care for people with disabilities.
- Pass the [Corona Virus Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities](#), including its HCBS grants to support Direct Support Professional (DSP) and Home Health Workforce and to support aging adults and people with disabilities in their homes and communities.

- Pass the Ensuring Direct Access to Direct Support Professionals Act (S. 3220/H.R. 5443).
- Make the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program permanent.

Housing

- Immediately provide an increase in McKinney-Vento Emergency Solutions Grants.
- Pass legislation to stop evictions to prevent homelessness during the pandemic, including the Eviction Crisis Act.
- Increase funding for the National Housing Trust Fund, the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program, the HOME Investment Partnerships program, and the Community Development Block Grant program and increase funding for Department of Agriculture housing programs.

Medication/Treatment

- Ensure that all testing and treatment for COVID-19 are provided at no cost for all individuals whether insured or not. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act focuses on testing, not treatment.
- Ensure that individuals can access medication and supplies refills for 90 days from all payers, including allowances for partial fills and controlled substances, without cost sharing and with financial assistance to allow for self-isolation for at-risk people with disabilities.
- Ensure that service providers have access to the necessary training, equipment and medical supplies. There must also be assurance of sufficient production of medications to meet a higher volume of needs during this time.
- Ventilator and PPE Production: Congress must appropriate funds specifically for ramping up production of both Personal Protective Equipment and ventilator production. The Secretary of Health and Human Services should be given authority to expedite bringing new production facilities online and do everything possible to mobilize a “whole-of-country” response to meet these production challenges.

Paid Leave/Sick

- Ensure paid sick days and paid leave provisions include caregivers who can't work because they are caring for an adult or a child with a disability or aging family member whose program has closed or care worker is sick. This was not included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

Rights

- Provide states with resources they need to ensure that even during this crisis, people with disabilities have the supports they need to remain in the community and are not forced into institutional or other congregate settings in violation of their civil rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the

Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, and at increased risk to their health.

- Ensure the rights of individuals with disabilities and older adults, to be free from discrimination on the basis of disability or age in programs and activities, are protected during all phases of disaster preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation.
- Congress should require HHS to issue guidance regarding rationing of care to ensure that when rationing treatment begins, decisions about how medical treatment should be allocated are made without discriminating based on disability. The National Council on Disability has already raised concerns about this issue in [a letter](#) to HHS' Office of Civil Rights.
- Do not allow any weakening of the protections of the ADA for businesses or in the building of new facilities if necessary.
- Provide additional funding to states to ensure accessible voting as states are moving to absentee and mail-in voting.

School/Education

- Ensure that any legislation to support access to virtual education and other supports are inclusive of the unique needs of people with disabilities, including requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

We know that we must act now to prevent much of the worst impact of this outbreak. We urge the Congress to act quickly so that the rights of people with disabilities are recognized in this crisis.

Sincerely,

AADD (Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities)

Access Living

Access to Independence of San Diego

ACCSES

ADAPT

Adapt Kare Choices Corporation

ADAPT Montana

ADAPT OF TEXAS

Addiction Connections Resource

Additional Kare for Kids, Inc.

Advocates for Life Skills and Opportunity

African American Health Alliance
AIDS Foundation of Chicago
Alianza Nacional de Campesinas
American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American Association for Homecare
American Association of People with Disabilities
American Association on Health and Disability
American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
American Cochlear Implant Alliance
American Council of the Blind
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
American Music Therapy Association
American Muslim Health Professionals
American Network of Community Options & Resources (ANCOR)
American Physical Therapy Association
American Spinal Injury Association
Apostolic Christian LifePoints
Arizona ADAPT
Arkansas Support Network
Arkansas Waiver Association
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
Association of People Supporting Employment First
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
Avancer Homes LLC

Battered Women's Justice Project
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Bloom's Connect
Boston Center for Independent Living
Brain Injury Association of America
Bread for the World
Bridges of Indiana
CALMRA, INC
Capabilities
Career Development Center
Caregiver Action Network
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities
Center for Disability Rights
Center for Independent Futures
Center for Independent Living
Center for Independent Living of Central PA
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for Public Representation
Central Iowa Center for Independent Living
Central PA ADAPT
CHI Centers, Inc.
Child Neurology Foundation
Child Welfare League of America
Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
Christian Reformed Church Disability Office
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office
Church World Service

Civil Rights Education and Enforcement Center
Clearbrook
Clinician Task Force
Coalition on Human Needs
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
CommunicationFIRST
Communities Actively Living Independent & Free
Community Resources for Independent Living
Community Support Systems
Community Systems, Inc. - Massachusetts
Community Systems, Inc. - Virginia
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)
CTF Illinois
D.C. Hunger Solutions
Developmental Disability Services of Jackson County-Eitas
Disabilities Resource Center of Siouxland
Disability Community Resource Center, Inc.
Disability Policy Consortium of Massachusetts
Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund
Diverse Disability Media
Domestic Violence Legal Empowerment and Appeals Project
Don Moss & Associates
DQIA: Disabled Queers in ACTION!
Easterseals
Echoing Hills Village, Inc.

EITAS

Epilepsy Foundation

Equip for Equality

Exceptional Parent Magazine

Falling Forward Foundation

Family Equality

Fiscal Policy Institution

Florida Center for Inclusive Communities

Food Research & Action Center

Friends Committee on National Legislation

GA ADAPT

Good Shepherd Center

GrassRoots Advocates for Independent Living

Healthcare Rights Coalition

Hearing Loss Association of America

HIGH IMPACT Mission-based Consulting

Hip Hop Caucus

Hispanic Federation

Hope House Foundation

Human Rights Campaign

Illinois Association of Microboards and Cooperatives (IAMC)

Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities

Illinois Parents of Adults with Developmental Disabilities Unite

Imamia medics international

IMANA (Islamic Medical Association of North America)

Inclusion Innovations LLC

Independence Associates, Inc.

Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley, Inc.

Independent Living Resource Center SF
Insights Consulting
Islamic Center Greater Cincinnati
Islamic Relief USA
Jewish Foundation for Group Homes
Jubilee Association of Maryland
Justice in Aging
Kansas ADAPT
KenCrest
L.I.F.E. Inc.
Lakeshore Foundation
LEAP
LEEDA Services of Illinois, Inc.
Liberty Arc
LifeScape
Little Lobbyists
Little People of America
Mandy's Farm
Marbridge Foundation
Marin Ventures
Meals on Wheels America
Mercy Without Limits
MomsRising
Montana Independent Living Project
Mosaic
MUHSEN
Muslim Anti-Racism Collaborative (MUSLIMARC)
Muslim Caucus Education Collective

Muslim Caucus of America
Muslim Public Affairs Council
Muslim Wellness Foundation
National Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association for the Advancement of Orthotics & Prosthetics
National Association of the Deaf
National Black Justice Coalition
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Center for Transgender Equality
National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life (NCALL)
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
National Coalition for Assistive and Rehabilitation Technology
National Council of Churches
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of State Agencies for the Blind
National Council on Independent Living
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Employment Law Project
National Employment Lawyers Association
National Federation of the Blind
National Health Law Program
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
National Network to End Domestic Violence

National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives

National Partnership for Women & Families

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

National Respite Coalition

National Women's Law Center

Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council

NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

Noble

North American Imams Federation

North Carolina Justice Center

Not Dead Yet

Ohio APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First)

Options for All

PA ADAPT

Paralyzed Veterans of America

Paraquad

PARTNERS FOR QUALITY

Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies

Pathway Services Unlimited, Inc.

Penny Appeal USA

Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas

PFLAG National

Placer Independent Resource Services

Poligon Education Fund

Progress Center for Independent Living

Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)

Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities

Reformed Church in America, Disability Concerns ministry

RespectAbility

RESULTS

Revolutionary Love Project

RICV

Service Center for Independent Life

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Shriver Center on Poverty Law

Silicon Valley Independent Living Center

Southern Illinois Case Coordination Services

Spina Bifida Association

Starkloff Disability Institute

Streator Unlimited, Inc.

Street Pictures

Summit Independent Living

SWISS

Tash

The Advocacy Institute

The Arc - Jefferson, Clear Creek & Gilpin Counties

The Arc of Anchorage

The Arc of Colorado

The Arc of Illinois

The Arc of the United States

The Coelho Center for Disability Law, Policy and Innovation

The Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL)

The Douglas Center

The Episcopal Church

The Forum for Youth Investment

The Fund for Community Reparations for Autistic People of Color's Interdependence, Survival, and Empowerment

The Islamic Society of North America

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis

The Myositis Association

The Rock Creek Foundation

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

Thresholds

Tierra del Sol Foundation

Topeka Independent Living Resource Center,

Tri-County Independent Living, Inc

Tzedek DC

Union for Reform Judaism

United Cerebral Palsy - National

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

United Mission for Relief and Development UMR

United Spinal Association

United States International Council on Disabilities

University of Cincinnati Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

University of Miami School of Law, Human Rights Clinic

Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Vermont Center for Independent Living

Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights

VetsFirst

Volunteers of America Mid-States

VT SILC

Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

We All Rise

West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy

Women Employed

World Institute on Disability

Yad HaChazakah -The Jewish Disability Empowerment Center

Zaman International