



Today's 27th Anniversary of the ADA: A Day of Action - Not Celebration

July 26, 2017

Today is the 27th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Unfortunately, instead of a day that is normally filled with joy and celebration, disability advocates across the country are engaged in the battle of their lives, fighting to save the healthcare and Medicaid home and community-based services that keep them in their own homes, included in their communities, and gainfully employed. When President George H. W. Bush signed this law in 1990, he said, "With today's signing of the landmark Americans for Disabilities Act, every man, woman and child with a disability can now pass through once-closed doors into a bright new era of equality, independence and freedom. Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down."

It's saddening that on this very day the United States Senate is considering various versions of legislation that would cut **BILLIONS** of dollars from Medicaid and strip protections from law that protect people with disabilities and their families from discrimination by insurance companies. People with disabilities and their families have every reason to fear the proposed cuts to Medicaid being debated in the healthcare bills in Congress, especially in Louisiana. With Louisiana potentially losing over **\$10 BILLION** in federal funding over the next decade, the Louisiana Legislature would have to raise revenue to come up with this lost funding or make massive cuts. One only has to review recent history to realize how unlikely it would be for Louisiana to be able to fill such an enormous funding gap. According to every national disability organization, states would have no choice but to drastically cut or eliminate optional programs such as the home and community-based waivers. The "shameful walls of exclusion" that began to tumble when President Bush signed the ADA would rise again very quickly as people with disabilities lose their community supports and are forced into institutional settings.

Yesterday Senators Bill Cassidy and John Kennedy both voted in favor of the Senate's 'repeal and replacement' bill. That bill failed to pass, but voting will continue today, tomorrow, and possibly Friday on different versions or different bills. The Council encourages you to be emboldened today by the anniversary of the ADA that promised disability rights as civil rights. Share with your senators what Medicaid means to you and your thoughts on the healthcare proposals being considered today and in the coming days. #SaveMedicaid #ProtectOurCare

Senator Bill Cassidy

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Senator John Kennedy

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