



Frequently Asked Questions

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What is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a treaty that describes the obligations of ratifying countries to promote, protect, fulfill, and ensure the rights of persons with disabilities. The treaty embodies the American ideals that form the basis of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): empowering persons with disabilities to be independent and productive citizens.

What is the history of the CRPD?

The US signed the CRPD on July 30, 2009, joining the 141 other signing nations. As of June 2012, the Convention has 114 ratifications and 153 signatures. On May 17, 2012, following almost three years of thorough inter-agency review, the Obama Administration submitted its treaty package to the Senate for its advice and consent for ratification.

Why should the US ratify? Isn't signature enough?

Signature of a treaty only conveys preliminary endorsement and demonstrates a country's intent to examine the treaty domestically and consider ratification. Ratification of the CRPD would show the serious commitment of the US to disability rights. Direct benefits of US ratification include:

- **Global leadership:** Ratification provides the US a unique opportunity to engage in substantive discussions in an international forum to provide our guidance and expertise to other countries who are adopting the laws necessary to implement the treaty.
- **Protecting U.S. citizens abroad:** Americans with disabilities, including our growing veteran population, live, work, travel, study, and retire outside the United States. As a ratifying party the United States can use the CRPD to encourage other countries to ratify and implement the instrument to achieve the high standard of accessibility that the United States has embraced, benefitting the millions of U.S. citizens abroad. (21 veterans and military service organizations support ratification including: Veterans of Foreign Wars, The American Legion, Wounded Warrior Project, and Disabled American Veterans)
- **Business interests:** The CRPD is leveling the playing field for U.S. corporations by requiring businesses abroad to create policies on accessibility that meet ADA standards. Further, the CRPD's implementation abroad will create demand for accessible goods that American businesses produce.

Does the CRPD create a new area for litigation?

No. The CRPD text does not indicate that it is meant to be automatically enforceable, and the treaty package's proposed declaration that the treaty is non self-executing would ensure that the treaty will not create a private cause of action in US Courts. The US has traditionally ratified other human rights treaties (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Convention against Torture, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination) with a non self-executing declaration.