Encourage Hatch to support CRPD

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Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) made a statement on the Senate floor yesterday opposing the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The Center for Persons with Disabilities at Utah State University has had an ongoing dialogue on this issue with the Senator and his staff, through his formal Disability Advisory Committee, for more than a year. As an organization, the CPD has encouraged Sen. Hatch to support the CRPD and invite all interested parties to do the same.

Read the full text of Sen. Hatch’s statement.

To contact Sen. Hatch:

DC office: (202) 224-5251

Salt Lake City office: (801) 524-4380

Leave an email message: http://www.hatch.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email-orrin

Twitter: @OrrinHatch (use #ISUPPORTCRPD)

Rebuttal points

• Hatch argument that CRPD is a threat to U.S. sovereignty: With adoption of the recommended Reservations, Understandings, and Declarations (RUDs), ratification of the treaty will not require any changes in any U.S. law or policy nor relinquish any authority whatsoever over U.S. law. The U.S. has held that RUDs are legally-binding.

• Hatch argument that CRPD would create wide obligations for U.S.: The only obligation the U.S. will have is to provide a periodic report of its implementation of disability rights laws as it has done for decades already for other human rights treaties the U.S. has ratified. The CRPD report will focus on issues that historically have been issues for people with disabilities such as accessibility, independent living and employment.

• Hatch argument that the definition of disability in CRPD is undefined: As was done in Committee last year, the U.S. disability community continues to support RUDs that make it clear that we use the U.S. definition of disability in understanding the treaty.

• Hatch argument that the definition of disability in CRPD is undefined: Like the ADA, the CRPD recognizes that new disabilities may emerge, requiring an evolving concept of our definition. The U.S. evolved its own concept with its ADA Amendments Act – the CRPD simply creates a framework for other countries to do the same.

• Hatch argument that the U.S. does not need to join treaty to lead: Hatch has stated that “America has long been a shining beacon of freedom around the world” yet does not support a treaty that grants freedom to 1 billion people with disabilities around the world.

• Hatch argument that CRPD is not a treaty with nations but the UN: Nations, not the UN, are responsible for implementing the treaty, providing guidance to their fellow nations on the treaty, and reviewing implementation of other ratified nations.

• Hatch argument that the CRPD would allow too much UN oversight over U.S. through Committee review: The CRPD Committee that reviews national reports is made up of civilian disability experts who provide guidance and suggestions – the majority of whom are people with disabilities themselves.