



March 26, 2020

Senator Richard Blumenthal
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) would like to thank you for introducing S. 3400, the “Ending Passenger Rail Mandatory Arbitration Act”. NDRN applauds this legislation for protecting the consumer and civil rights of Amtrak customers including customers with disabilities.

NDRN is the voluntary membership association for Protection and Advocacy (P&A) and Client Assistance Program (CAP) agencies. The P&A and CAP agencies are a nationwide network of congressionally mandated, cross disability organizations operating in every state in the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the US Virgin Islands). There is also a P&A and CAP affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations located in the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

The P&A/CAP Network has the authority to provide legally based advocacy services and legal representation to all people with disabilities. P&As and CAPs pursue legal, administrative, and other appropriate remedies under all applicable federal and state laws to protect and advocate for the rights of people with disabilities. Collectively, the P&A/CAP Network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States. NDRN and the P&A Network have taken a strong interest in the accessibility of rail transportation for a number of years, including issuing a report on the failure of Amtrak to be accessible for people with disabilities in 2013. That report “All Aboard (Except People with Disabilities) Amtrak’s 23 Years of ADA Compliance Failure” can be found [here](#).

NDRN is especially supportive of this legislation because it will help ensure individuals with disabilities have the option to resolve their consumer and civil rights disputes with Amtrak through avenues that exclude mandatory arbitration. This legislation will restore vital legal rights to Amtrak customers who wish to address their disputes through the courts rather than through a private arbitration system. NDRN agrees that consumers should not be forced to shed their constitutional rights and legally protected status when they enter an Amtrak car.

While the elimination of forced arbitration is a step in the right direction, as the report referenced above shows, accessibility problems continue to exist at Amtrak stations two decades after the passage of the ADA. The report shows that much is left to be done around the country to ensure people with disabilities can access Amtrak services.

Again, NDRN applauds this important piece of legislation, which will protect individuals with disabilities who use Amtrak. We look forward to working with you to enact this legislation into law. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Cyrus Huncharek, Public Policy Analyst, at cyrus.huncharek@ndrn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Curtis L. Decker".

Curtis L. Decker
Executive Director