

July 31, 2020

Senator Bob Casey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Mary Gay Scanlon
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Jamie Raskin
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Thank you for Introducing the Accessible Voting Act of 2020

Dear Senator Casey, Senator Klobuchar, Representative Scanlon and Representative Raskin:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) writes to thank you for introducing the Accessible Voting Act (AVA) of 2020. This legislation will address the needs of voters with disabilities and ensure they have equal access to the vote on Election Day and beyond.

NDRN is the non-profit membership organization for the nationwide network of federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) and Client Assistance Program (CAP) systems for individuals with disabilities. The P&As and CAPs were established by the United States Congress to protect the rights of people with disabilities and their families through legal support, advocacy, referral, and education. P&As and CAPs are in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and there is a P&A and CAP affiliated with the American Indian Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations in the Four Corners region of the Southwest. Collectively, the P&A and CAP Network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the U.S.

Through the Protection and Advocacy for Voter Access (PAVA) program, created by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the P&As have a federal mandate to ensure the full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote and accessing polling places and are the leading experts on access to the vote for people with disabilities in the U.S.

Despite the size, diversity, and political commitment of the disability community, America's electoral system remains largely inaccessible and has a long history of excluding people with disabilities. Even well into the 21st Century, voters with disabilities across the U.S. are still being denied equal access to the vote. Laws, such as the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and HAVA are all in place to protect the rights of people with disabilities and their access to the vote. Yet states and jurisdictions across the country still make routine decisions every election cycle, knowingly or unknowingly, that prevent voters with disabilities from casting a private and independent ballot on Election Day.

People with disabilities have overcome tremendous odds to participate in our elections for years, but they simply should not have to. This is why the AVA is such a necessary piece of legislation that will further uphold the full realization of equal access created by the ADA and HAVA. It will ensure voters with disabilities can fully and equally participate in our elections for years to come.

Voters with disabilities must continue to have their voices heard on Election Day. They are a force in American politics. They cannot and must not be denied access from the ballot box as the U.S. continues to strive for full realization of equal access.

Again, NDRN thanks you for your unwavering leadership on behalf of voters with disabilities. The AVA will help ensure voters with disabilities are treated as equals in our Democracy. We look forward to working with you to pass this legislation. If you have any questions please contact Erika Hudson, Public Policy Analyst, at Erika.hudson@ndrn.org or (202) 408-9514 x134.

Sincerely,



Curtis L. Decker
Executive Director