



December 13, 2022

Senator Tammy Duckworth
524 Hart Senate Building
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

On behalf of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), I would like to thank you for introducing the Website and Software Application Accessibility Act (S. 4998). The guidelines established by this bill will become the basis for an accessibility standard monitored and enforced by the Department of Justice and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. This standard would ensure that the websites for public accommodations, all public entities, and employers are accessible to people with disabilities.

NDRN is the voluntary membership association for the nationwide network of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies. P&As are congressionally mandated, cross disability organizations operating in every state and the U.S. Territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands). There is also a P&A affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations. The P&A Network comprises the nation's largest provider of legally based advocacy services for persons with disabilities.

NDRN believes that all Americans should have the ability to leverage the full force of the law to protect their rights. Most businesses are required by law to make their websites accessible but claim to have no clear-cut definition of what "accessible" actually means. By providing businesses with a solid set of accessibility standards there will now be a clear definition for what is accessible to expand their potential customer pool, including an entirely new population of consumers previously excluded. This legislation will allow more Americans to be able to electronically support businesses, apply for jobs, and work at places that may have previously been impossible. With approximately one in four adults in the United States reporting living

with at least one disability¹, we should strive to ensure that these online interactions are equally accessible for all Americans.

NDRN especially appreciates the intent of the bill to remove accessibility barriers while increasing accountability for websites which remain inaccessible. NDRN hopes that by assisting workers and consumers in their pursuit of accessibility, this bill will also have a positive economic impact on American businesses.

Again, NDRN applauds the introduction of this important piece of legislation. We look forward to working with you to enact the Website and Software Application Accessibility Act into law. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Claire Stanley, Public Policy Analyst, at Claire.stanley@ndrn.org

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Marlene Sells". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Executive Director
National Disability Rights Network

¹ *Prevalence of Disability and Disability Types* | CDC. (2019, November 18). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/features/disability-prevalence-rural-urban.html>