



April 11, 2023

Representative Jimmy Panetta
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Panetta:

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)* writes to thank you for co-sponsoring the Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion for Disasters (READI) Act, H.R. 2371. This piece of legislation will work to provide long-needed services for people with disabilities before, during, and after disasters.

Starting with Hurricane Katrina, NDRN and the P&A Network began to focus more on the issues surrounding emergency preparedness, emergency management, and recovery. This included formulating Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the Red Cross. These MOUs have ensured the P&As access to emergency shelters, greater involvement in preparedness tasks being performed at the state and local levels, and involvement in more planning and training activities.

People with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by disasters. Emergency Management Systems often do not have policies put into place to accommodate residents with disabilities, and many of the P&As routinely work on emergency management services for their residents. The training and technical assistance provided under the READI Act will better equip state and local services to accommodate disaster victims during major disasters.

Again, NDRN applauds the introduction of this important piece of legislation. We look forward to working with you to enact the bill. 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 Sallo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marlene Sallo
Executive Director
National Disability Rights Network

*NDRN is the non-profit membership association of Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies located in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the United States Territories. In addition, there is a P&A affiliated with the Native American Consortium which includes the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations in the Four Corners region of the Southwest.

P&A agencies are authorized under various federal statutes to provide legal representation and related advocacy services, and to investigate abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities in a variety of settings. The P&A Network comprises the nation's largest provider of legally-based advocacy services for persons with disabilities. NDRN and the P&A Network advocate for many people with disabilities before, during, and after disasters.