



STRONGER TOGETHER

February 4, 2014

The Honorable Bob Corker
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Corker:

The Epilepsy Foundation of East Tennessee was disappointed to hear that you are no longer participating in the negotiations to help ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). You are an important voice in the negotiation process and it was disheartening to hear that you think the CRPD should not be ratified. We understand your concern that certain treaties could give the federal government too much power over the states, but we feel that the CRPD does not pose this threat to state sovereignty.

The Epilepsy Foundation of East Tennessee is one of the leading nonprofit patient organizations helping to provide a voice for the approximately 57,000 residents of Tennessee living with epilepsy and seizures. These people living with epilepsy and the millions of other Americans living with a disability have benefited greatly from our disability laws, and we must now work to ensure these protections become a worldwide standard.

The CRPD is modeled after the Americans with Disabilities Act and will help make our gold standard a reality worldwide. The U.S. would not be required to take any additional actions to fulfill the requirements of the treaty, but with ratification we would be able to help implement these positive changes around the world. Your press release mentioned you are concerned that treaties are not limited and can allow the federal government to overstep its authority. You cited a case recently heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, *Bond v. U.S.*, and linked to a Wall Street Journal article about the case titled, "Court Doubts Treaty Relevant to Poisoning Trial." The article includes quotes from multiple justices stating their skepticism to the applicability of the Chemical Weapons Convention to the case and reflecting their belief the case is an example of prosecutorial overreach, as well as their belief that the powers of a treaty are limited by the intentions of the Senate when ratifying the treaty. Such a limit could easily be established for the CRPD while still allowing millions of Americans the freedom to travel and enjoy the same protections that they do here in the U.S.

We believe that the CRPD will help millions of Americans and a billion people throughout the world who live with a disability. The CRPD would not require any additional action and would allow the U.S. to regain its position as a leader in the disability community. We urge you to reconsider your position on the CRPD, and at the very least to return to the negotiating table with Senator Menendez. If you have any questions please contact Angela Ostrom at aostrom@efa.org.

Thank you,

Lynn Goad
Executive Director
Epilepsy Foundation of East Tennessee