



**Join the USBLN[®] TODAY in Appealing to the United States Senate
to Ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)**

Level the playing field for U.S. businesses, which currently compete with foreign counterparts who do not have to adhere to high standards when it comes to accommodation and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

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WASHINGTON, DC (October 28, 2013) – In support of opportunities for people with disabilities around the world, the US Business Leadership Network[®] (USBLN[®]) with member company IBM, and OhioHealth, lead employer of the Ohio Business Leadership Network, invites American businesses to support the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which is an international disability treaty that was inspired by U.S. leadership in recognizing the rights of people with disabilities. The CRPD is a vital framework for creating legislation and policies around the world that embrace the rights and dignity of all people with disabilities.

The CRPD Will Promote New Markets and Global Commerce by:

- Increasing international markets and export opportunities for U.S. assistive technology companies
- Advancing America's global economic interest
- Promoting U.S. public procurement rules (Section 508) among governments overseas
- Exporting American made accessibility products and services
- Promoting U.S. standards internationally
- Supporting U.S. public and private research and development and U.S. academic leadership in global accessibility innovations

What is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)?

Based upon the principles of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity, which are at the core of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the CRPD seeks "to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities." The CRPD would not require any new costs or changes to existing law in order for the U.S. to comply with its provisions.

The United States signed the CRPD in 2009. On December 4, 2012 the United States Senate considered the ratification of the CRPD but fell 5 votes short of the super-majority vote required. The media coverage of the Senate's failure to ratify the disability treaty has been overwhelming and the CRPD's Senate leaders remain committed to bringing the treaty up in the 113th Congress.

U.S Ratification of the CRPD Has Strong Business and Bipartisan Support

Business groups that have spoken out in favor of ratification include the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Assistive Technology Industry Association of America (ATIA), the Information Technology Industry Council (ITIC) and the USBLN[®] with member company IBM, and OhioHealth, lead employer of the Ohio Business Leadership Network.

Senators McCain (R-AZ) and Barrasso (R-WY) led the treaty ratification effort with now Secretary of State Kerry, Durbin (D-IL), and Harkin (D-IA) in the 112th Congress under shared values of independence, respect, and dignity for all people with disabilities. This bipartisanship leadership for the CRPD continues in the 113th Congress.

The CRPD will provide U.S. companies operating abroad with competitive advantages in advancing equal access and opportunities for local employees by:

- Increasing international employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for persons with disabilities
- Promoting international technology accessibility standards and guidelines in the workplace
- Promoting good practices overseas and adopting the spirit of America's disability rights laws like the ADA
- Exercising local leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility and good citizenship

What Can American Business Do to Promote Ratification of the CRPD?

- To add your company's signature to the Business Sign-On Letter contact Jill Houghton at jill@usbln.org or call 954-461-4726 – please respond by **NOVEMBER 6, 2013**;
- Educate senior leaders, employee resource groups, and government affairs on the need to ratify the CRPD; and,
- Promote support for ratification of the CRPD.

For more information, please call Jill Houghton (954-461-4726), Executive Director, USBLN[®], or Kevin Locke (202-347-0102) at the U.S. International Council on Disabilities (USICD) to join an informational call to be determined soon. Or, go to www.disabilitytreaty.org now to see the text of the treaty and related materials.

About the US Business Leadership Network[®] (USBLN[®])

The US Business Leadership Network[®] (USBLN[®]) is a national non-profit that helps business drive performance by leveraging disability inclusion in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace. The USBLN[®] serves as the collective voice of over 50 Business Leadership Network affiliates across the United States, representing over 5,000 businesses. Additionally, the USBLN[®] Disability Supplier Diversity Program[®] (DSDP) is the nation's leading third party certification program for disability-owned businesses, including businesses owned by service-disabled veterans. www.usbln.org

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