Dear Fellow Federationists,

The final push is on to get the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) treaty ratified by the United States Senate. Here is why it is so important that this treaty be ratified:

* A broad coalition of over 850 U.S. disability rights, civil rights, faith, business, and veteran organizations support ratification of the CRPD. In addition to the National Federation of the Blind, these organizations include: American Association of People with Disabilities, Multiple Sclerosis Society, National Coalition for Mental Health, Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center, Higher Education Consortium for Special Education, Lutheran Services in America Disability Network, The Jewish Federations of North America, Muslim Public Affairs Council, NASCAR, AT&T, IBM, National Association of Blind Veterans, and Disabled American Veterans.
* This treaty will extend the values of the Americans with Disabilities Act worldwide, and improve access for Americans with disabilities, including veterans, who live, work, or travel abroad.
* Ratification of the CRPD will not result in any international authority over U.S. law. The U.S. is currently party to over ten thousand treaties and international agreements, through which the U.S. has strengthened its position as a global leader, not weakened it.
* The CRPD protects parental rights and highlights the important role of parents in raising children with disabilities. The treaty requires that "in no case shall a child be separated from parents on the basis of a disability of either the child or one or both of the parents."
* Two proposed reservations to the CRPD provide additional protection to parental authorities, ensuring that state and federal disability law and protections are fully preserved, including laws providing the parental right to homeschool one's child.
* The CRPD does not address abortion or other health practices. It addresses the right of people with disabilities to have the same rights as others.

Last December, a floor vote in the Senate to ratify the CRPD fell just five votes short of the necessary sixty-seven votes to ratify. The Senate is expected to again take a vote on ratification this month. This may be the last chance for the CRPD to be ratified by the United States.

Below is a list of senators who have indicated they are undecided on how they will vote on the ratification of the CRPD. If there are any senators on the list who are from your state, it is vital that you call their office and urge them to vote in favor of ratification of the CRPD. Once you have made your phone calls, get other blind people and other people with disabilities to call their senators as well. It is vitally important that the senators who will be voting on the CRPD know that it is important to blind Americans. Please make your phone calls during the week of September 8th.

Thank you for your help. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Lou Ann Blake at the National Federation of the Blind Jernigan Institute by email at lblake@nfb.org or by phone at 410-659-9314, extension 2221.

Undecided Senator List

If any senators on this list represent your state, please call them during the week of September 8, 2014, and urge them to vote in favor of ratification of the CRPD. You can contact your senator by calling the U.S. Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and the operator will connect you.

Senator Alexander, Tennessee

Senator Blunt, Missouri

Senator Chambliss, Georgia

Senator Coats, Indiana

Senator Cochran, Mississippi

Senator Isakson, Georgia

Senator Johanns, Nebraska

Senator Portman, Ohio

Senator Burr, North Carolina

Senator Grassley, Iowa

Senator Graham, South Carolina

Senator Roberts, Kansas

Senator Scott, South Carolina

Senator Wicker, Mississippi

Remember, the Capitol switchboard number is (202) 224-3121.