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July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

Dear President Bush,

As we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), representing millions of Americans with disabilities, would like to thank you for signing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law.

On behalf of our consumers, Centers on Independent Living (CIL) and State Independent Living Councils (SILCs), we want to extend our gratitude and appreciation for your commitment and foresight for signing in to law the first comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities in the world, when you signed the ADA on July 26, 1990. Founded in 1982, NCIL is the longest-running national cross-disability, grassroots organization run by and for individuals with disabilities.

In this historical, extraordinary and momentous act, you liberated millions of Americans with disabilities from discrimination, segregation and isolation, and gave us a sense of acceptability. It is altogether fitting that this expression of our most basic ideals of freedom and equality, exemplified within the spirit of the ADA, serves as the "blue print" and guiding principles of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Your historical legacy, within the context of civil rights for millions of Americans with disabilities, goes far beyond the sovereignty of our nation, it encompasses the world!

In 1986 you personally accepted a report from the National Council on Disability (NCD) entitled, "Toward Independence" in which the NCD recommended the enactment of comprehensive legislation to ban discrimination against persons with disabilities. This report led to the birth of the ADA.

The ADA has served to enlighten and promote an understanding of what is possible, simply by its provision of reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Due to the expansion of the possible and the enhancement of societal understanding of the capabilities of persons with disabilities, the historical negative stigma and invisibility of persons with disabilities has been greatly diminished.

Through the enactment of the ADA and the inclusion of individuals with disabilities within the activities and participation of community life, our society as a whole has prospered.

As our nation celebrates its day of independence on July 4th, millions of us now have our own day of independence, celebrated on July 26th. Many individuals worked tirelessly to ensure that "Toward Independence" progressed from an idea to a Bill, and numerous others labored diligently to move the Bill through Congress. In the end, it was your judiciousness, clear vision and dedication to justice that culminated with your pen signing this Bill into law. With your passage of the ADA, millions of us now have access to possibilities that in the past, was only a dream.

As our Declaration of Independence has served as an inspiration for people throughout the world seeking freedom and independence, the ADA has become the model for the choices and opportunities of future generations within our nation and around the world.

Perhaps, Mr. President, you said it best when you said: "Let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down." Again, on behalf of all of us with disabilities, NCIL extends to you our most sincere appreciation and gratitude for your selfless act, in signing the Americans with Disabilities Act into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly Buckland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping underline.

Kelly Buckland  
Executive Director