



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 31, 2019

The Hon. James Langevin  
U. S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Langevin:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) applaud your introduction of the Real Emergency Access for Aging and Disability Inclusion (REAADI) for Disasters Act. CCD is a coalition of national disability rights, advocacy, consumer, provider and self-advocate organizations representing this nation's more than 61 million Americans with disabilities.

Since the turn of this century, our nation has experienced a number of catastrophic disasters with extensive loss of life and property damage. Too often, older individuals and people with disabilities have been overlooked in the preparation for and response to these emergencies and have struggled to obtain the appropriate supports and services they need to rebuild their lives. The REAADI Act will create a number of mechanisms to promote a well-designed emergency preparedness, disaster response and recovery system to ensure the safety, well-being, accessibility, rights and dignity of people with disabilities, older adults and others with access and functional needs impacted by disasters.

The REAADI for Disasters Act would establish a National Commission on Disability Rights and Disasters to study the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults and others with access and functional needs throughout emergency preparation and planning, disaster response, recovery and mitigation. The commission will provide recommendations on how Federal, tribal, territorial, state, local and non-governmental response agencies, disability and community organizations and other stakeholders can better coordinate and provide for the needs of individuals with disabilities in disaster impacted communities before, during and after disasters, and how to optimize resources for supporting those recommendations.

Beyond the Commission, this bill also aims to enhance technical assistance to state and local emergency managers and disaster relief agencies to assure that the needs of people with disabilities and older Americans are addressed throughout emergency preparedness, disaster response, recovery, mitigation and community resilience efforts. There are also positive provisions in the legislation calling for a review of all Americans with Disabilities Act settlement agreements related to disaster response activities for the

past twelve years. Such an investigation is critical to determine if federal disaster funds have been used appropriately for access to emergency programs and services.

Effective emergency preparedness and disaster response are a matter of life and death for people with disabilities and older adults. With the passage and implementation of the READI for Disasters Act, people with disabilities and older adults will no longer be disproportionately affected by the disruptions experienced when disaster strikes, and communities will be far better prepared to optimize limited resources and maximize positive outcomes for everyone. A well-designed and accessible system, put into place well before the next disaster strikes, will be more responsive, more effective, and more cost-efficient, significantly improving community readiness, resilience and disaster recovery for everyone.

Thank you for championing this effort. We look forward to working with you to ensure passage of this vital legislation during the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress.

American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association on Health and Disability (AAHD)  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)  
American Occupational Therapy Association  
American Therapeutic Recreation Association  
American Physical Therapy Association  
Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs (ATAP)  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Autism Society of America  
Blinded Veterans Association  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Center for Public Representation  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Easterseals  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Down Syndrome Congress  
Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Partnership for Inclusive Disaster Strategies  
TASH  
The Arc of the United States  
United Spinal Association  
VetsFirst