



Commemorating 40 Years
Of Disability Advocacy
1973-2013

Aug. 30, 2013

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education,
Labor & Pensions
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander:

We write on behalf of the Consortium of Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Rights Task Force to urge the swift confirmation of Chai Feldblum to a second term as a commissioner of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). CCD is a coalition of national disability-related organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures full equality, self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

As you know, the EEOC plays an extremely important role in ensuring that people with disabilities are protected from employment discrimination and in interpreting and enforcing the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The HELP Committee's July 2012 report, *Unfinished Business: Making People with Disabilities a National Priority*, called attention to the facts that the employment rates for people with disabilities remain far below the employment rates for any other group tracked by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, that people with disabilities participate in the workforce at less than one-third the rate of the general population, and that workers with disabilities have dropped out of the labor force at a much higher rate during the recession. Against this backdrop, it is critical to have a commissioner at the EEOC who understands disability law and is committed to enforcing the employment rights of people with disabilities. While addressing employment discrimination is not, by itself, sufficient to raise the workforce participation of people with disabilities to acceptable levels, it is an important part of the effort that must be made.

Commissioner Feldblum came to the EEOC with impressive credentials -- including, among other things, wide-ranging scholarship as well as extraordinary policy and legislative achievements to promote protections for individuals with disabilities and others -- and has done a great deal to advance the law during her tenure as a commissioner. She has played a critical role

in promulgating strong bipartisan regulations implementing the ADA Amendments Act as well as the Genetic Information Non-Discrimination Act. She has worked tirelessly to train and educate stakeholders across the nation, helping the employer community as well as employees and job seekers understand and implement the ADA's requirements. She has engaged with businesses as well as workers to craft solutions that take into account the needs of both. And she has proved to be a thoughtful policymaker who is respected by all sides.

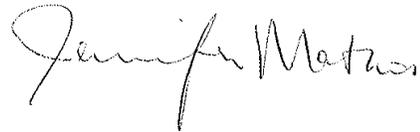
There are a number of critically important issues that the EEOC must address in order to promote the employment of people with disabilities, and a need for leaders who can guide the agency's strategic efforts to advance the law under the ADA Amendments Act.

No one is better suited than Chai Feldblum to ensure that the EEOC will take effective measures to enforce the rights of people with disabilities. We urge the HELP Committee to act on her nomination and confirm her as quickly as possible, and we stand ready to work with you on this nomination.

Sincerely,



Curt Decker
National Disability Rights Network



Jennifer Mathis
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law



Sandy Finucane
Epilepsy Foundation



Mark Richert
American Foundation for the Blind

Co-Chairs, CCD Rights Task Force