



February 9, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Minority Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), I am writing in opposition to the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 (H.R. 620). NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1990 to provide people with disabilities equal access in all areas of public life, including work, education, transportation and public and private places open to the general public. The need for the law arose out of pervasive discrimination that people with disabilities historically faced in accessing services and opportunities that most Americans take for granted. Although barriers still remain, the ADA has made a significant difference in providing Americans with disabilities opportunities to participate meaningfully in daily life as contributing members of society.

NAMI is concerned that HR 620 would make it more difficult for people with disabilities to access public accommodations. Individuals with disabilities who encounter barriers to accessing public accommodations would be precluded from seeking immediate recourse but instead would have the burden of providing the business with specific notice of which provisions of the ADA were violated and would then have to wait for a lengthy period to give the business time to begin correcting the problems which created the barriers. By imposing requirements to provide detailed information in initial complaints beyond what is currently required under Title III of the ADA, HR 620 will have a chilling effect on the ability of people with disabilities to pursue legal recourse when necessary, including finding attorneys willing to provide representation.

People with disabilities, including those who live with mental illness, contribute to American life in so many ways. The ADA has played no small part by helping people overcome barriers and achieve their full potential. The passage of HR 620 would represent a significant step backwards after so many years of progress. Please do not allow this bill to come to the floor for a vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Giliberti". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Giliberti, J.D.
Chief Executive Officer