



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS  
WITH DISABILITIES**

May 17, 2016

The Honorable Trent Franks  
Chair, House Judiciary  
Subcommittee Constitution and Civil Justice  
2435 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Cohen  
Ranking Member, House Judiciary  
Subcommittee Constitution and Civil Justice  
2404 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Re: CCD Rights TF Letter of Opposition to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
Education and Reform Act of 2015 (H.R. 3765)

Dear Chair Franks and Ranking Member Cohen:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Rights Task Force write in opposition to the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2015 (H.R. 3765). 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.

Almost 26 years ago, was carefully crafted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to take the needs of covered entities such as businesses into account. It was the disability community that gave up the ability to receive damages from failure to comply with the federal ADA by only allowing injunctive relief and attorney's fees for violations of the law. Unfortunately, almost 26 years after enactment, there are still organizations, businesses, and companies who have yet to comply with this important civil rights law for persons with disabilities.

A number of bills, like H.R. 3765, have been introduced in Congress that would create barriers to the civil rights for persons with disabilities that do not exist in other civil rights laws. These bills seek to limit the power of the ADA and reduce compliance with the law. The ADA Education and Reform Act of 2015 is one of these bills, but goes even further by criminalizing attempts to enforce a person's civil rights. There is no other civil rights legislation where it could be a crime to file a complaint to enforce your civil rights.

As was mentioned earlier, the ADA has been law for almost 26 years, if a business has decided to not comply with the requirements of this legislation by this point, why should a person have to wait more time for enforcement of their civil rights? Should an individual who is not allowed to enter a restaurant because of their race, gender or religion, have to wait before seeking to enforce their civil rights? The disability community already compromised with the passage of the ADA by not allowing individuals to seek damages from violations of their civil rights, but now legislation like H.R. 3765 seeks to further erode the civil rights of people with disabilities by criminalizing actions taken to enforce their civil rights or delay achieving those rights.

We look forward to an opportunity to speak with you and your staff about our concerns. As H.R. 3765 would erode the civil rights of people with disabilities, we must oppose this legislation. Please contact Dara Baldwin, Senior Public Policy Analyst, National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) with any questions or concerns at [dara.baldwin@ndrn.org](mailto:dara.baldwin@ndrn.org) or 202-408-9514 ext. 102.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)  
American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)  
The Arc of the United States  
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)  
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law  
Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation  
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)  
Epilepsy Foundation  
Learning Disabilities Association of America  
Lutheran Services in America Disability Network  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)  
National Council on Independent Living (NCIL)  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)  
Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA)  
United Spinal Association

Cc: House Judiciary Committee  
Representative Ted Poe