

Disability -  
Proclamation

*fax # 6-7431*

*Cynthia Rice*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

September 29, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR:

FIRST LADY'S STAFF (MELANNE VERVEER)  
SEAN MALONEY (LISEL LOY)  
CHARLES RUFF  
THURGOOD MARSHALL, JR.  
LARRY STEIN  
✓ BRUCE REED  
MARY BETH CAHILL  
MINYON MOORE  
MARK LINDSAY  
STEPHANIE STREETT - FYI

FROM:

Lana Dickey/Maureen Hudson  
for DAN BURKHARDT

SUBJECT:

(Draft Proclamation)  
National Disability Employment  
Awareness Month, 1999

Attached for your review is the above-mentioned proclamation designating October 1999, as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

It was submitted by the Department of Labor, through the Office of Management and Budget and edited/revised by the Presidential Letters and Messages Office.

IMMEDIATE ATTENTION REQUIRED. Written or oral response required by no later than 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, September 29, 1999. IF WE HAVE NOT HEARD FROM YOU BY 5:00 P.M., WE WILL ASSUME THAT THE DRAFT IS ACCEPTABLE TO YOU.

For questions, discussion, or routine clearance, contact Lana Dickey, extension 65504, or Maureen Hudson, extension 65902, via phone or interoffice mail, in room 91. Thank you.

cc: Tim Saunders

## NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH, 1999

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

## A PROCLAMATION

As Americans, we define ourselves in many ways -- not only by our families and communities, but also by our work; not only by who we are, but also by what we do for a living. Millions of Americans with disabilities, however, do not share that experience because their path to the world of work has been strewn with barriers. At a time when the unemployment rate in our Nation is at the lowest level in a generation -- 4.2 percent -- a staggering 75 percent of Americans with disabilities remain unemployed, even though the vast majority of them want to work.

One of the greatest barriers to employment for people with disabilities is that, under current law, they often become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they work. That is why I have challenged the Congress to pass the bipartisan Work Incentives Improvement Act. This proposed legislation would extend Medicare coverage for people with disabilities who return to work and improve access to health care through Medicaid. No American should ever be forced to choose between health care coverage and employment, and this legislation will ensure that no one has to make that decision.

In addition to fully funding the Work Incentives Improvement Act, my Administration's proposed budget includes a \$1,000 tax credit to help people with disabilities offset the cost of special transportation and other work-related expenses. We are also seeking to double our investment in such assistive technology as braille translators, mobile phones, and voice recognition software that empower disabled citizens with the tools they need to make the transition to work. And in June of this year, I signed an executive order to expand employment opportunities for people with psychiatric disabilities and set an example for the private sector by ensuring that the Federal

Government's hiring and promotion standards are the same for these workers as they are for people with mental retardation or severe physical disabilities.

These proposals are true investments in our Nation's greatest resource: our people. At a time when businesses across the country need a larger work force to stay competitive and keep our dynamic economy growing without danger of inflation, the millions of Americans with disabilities represent an invaluable source of untapped talent, people who can bring urgently needed skills, energy, and creativity to the workplace.

Next year our Nation will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 25th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act -- the two landmark pieces of legislation that transformed our country's disability policy and set a standard for other nations around the world. But while laws can change behavior, they cannot change attitudes. It is up to each of us to dispel any stigma or discrimination that prevents people with disabilities from taking their rightful place in the work force. And it is up to each of us to recognize and celebrate the achievements of disabled Americans who bring so much to the quality of our national life: people like journalist John Hockenberry, who has proved that a wheelchair need not be an obstacle to news reporting and analysis; athletes like Tom Whittaker, the first person with a physical disability to conquer Mount Everest; artists like sculptor Michael Naranjo and painter Alex Wilhite, who show us that artistic vision need not be limited by deafness or blindness.

To recognize the enormous potential of individuals with disabilities and to encourage all Americans to work toward their full integration into the work force, the Congress, by joint resolution approved August 11, 1945, as amended (36 U.S.C. 155), has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 1999 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. I call upon Government officials, educators, labor leaders, employers, and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities that reaffirm our determination to fulfill both the letter and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this  
day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord  
nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of the Independence of the  
United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.



Cynthia A. Rice

07/20/99 08:45:06 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message  
cc: J. Eric Gould/OPD/EOP@EOP  
bcc: Records Management@EOP  
Subject: Re: ADA Anniversary message 



Here dis0719 draft ada statement are mine and Eric's suggested edits.

Jonathan M. Young



Jonathan M. Young  
07/18/99 07:34:16 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Delia A. Cohen/WHO/EOP@EOP  
cc: Jeanne Lambrew/OPD/EOP@EOP, Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP@EOP, Lisa M. Brown/OVP@OVP, Edward W. Correia/WHO/EOP@EOP  
Subject: ADA Anniversary message

[Sorry, forgot the attachment.]



POTUS ADA Message.

Attached please find a draft POTUS message for the ninth anniversary of the ADA. I'm preparing to do a hard-copy mailing to about 2,000 people in the disability community around the country. I'd like to get this in the mail Wednesday or Thursday, if humanly possible. Thanks, Delia, for working on this.

Jeanne, Cynthia, Lisa, Eddie: I'm particularly interested in what you think should be said about the S.C. decisions and the Work Incentives bill. I also want to include a revised disability accomplishments document, and a couple other things. I'll be sending you a revision of the accomps piece soon.

Message Sent To:

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Jonathan M. Young/WHO/EOP@EOP

delia a. cohen/who/eop@eop

jeanne lambrew/opd/eop@eop

lisa m. brown/ovp@ovp

edward w. correia/who/eop@eop

## POTUS ADA Message

Dear friends,

Next year, at the dawn of the millennium, we will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). These two laws, championed by disability advocates throughout the United States and modeled by people throughout the world, have helped to transform our nation's disability policy.

Early in this century, disability was a central category for excluding immigrants from entering this country, similar to exclusions based on race and ethnicity. Now, we strive to promote inclusion for people with disabilities in all aspects of American society, just as we do for racial and ethnic minorities. For centuries, Americans have presumed that disability automatically meant a life of dependence. Now, we seek to fashion disability policy with the recognition that people with disabilities want to – and can – lead independent lives and contribute to our nation's prosperity. For far too long, we have encumbered disabled Americans with paternalistic policies that prevent them from reaching their potential. But now, we endeavor to empower individuals with the tools necessary for achieving their dreams.

As we celebrate the ninth anniversary of the ADA, let us remember just how far we have come. Because of the rights established in the ADA, IDEA, Rehabilitation Act, Telecommunications Accessibility Act, Fair Housing Act, and other laws, our society is now more accessible to people with disabilities than at any other time in our history. Like the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, disability advocacy has drawn our nation's attention to the pervasive stigma and discrimination faced by people with disabilities. Never before has disability been so prominently discussed in the mainstream media. We must use this rising level of awareness to infuse the values of the ADA – equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency – into all aspects of government and social policy.

To succeed, we must be both vigilant in defending the ADA and persistent in implementing the law. I am pleased that the Supreme Court upheld the spirit of the ADA in recognizing that the unjustified isolation of institutionalized persons with disabilities is prohibited discrimination. But I am concerned that the way our courts define disability may undermine the ADA's employment goals. People may be trapped in a horrible catch-22: "too disabled" to be employed but "not disabled enough" to be protected by the ADA. We must work together to ensure that the ADA's original intent – to dismantle discrimination based on accumulated myths and fears – is sustained. No American – on account of race, ethnicity, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or disability – should be denied the opportunity to hold a job for which they are fully capable.

While the ADA has been a source of hope to our citizens with disabilities, it has not been enough to tackle the abominable rate of unemployment. My Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities is building on the ADA's foundation by developing a coordinated and active employment agenda for people with disabilities. By increasing access to health care; more assistance at home and in the workplace; and the use of new technologies we will ensure that all Americans can participate in the workplace. This year, my budget includes a three-part initiative

aimed at removing significant barriers to work for people with disabilities. This proposal invests \$2 billion over five years to help provide better health care options for people with disabilities who work by fully funding the Work Incentives Improvement Act, a \$1,000 tax credit for work-related expenses, and investments in technology that can enhance the ability of people with disabilities ability to participate in the workplace. I urge Congress to move swiftly and pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act so that people no longer have to choose between health care coverage and employment. ~~This includes expanding our investment in assistive technology, providing meaningful access to quality health care, increasing the availability of affordable personal attendant services, leveling the playing field between psychiatric and physical disabilities in Federal hiring practices, and creating small business opportunities. It also means enacting the Work Incentives Improvement Act into law. This legislation would take a small but profound step toward integrating our disability policy.~~ We cannot think of income, health, and other services and supports as antithetical to the civil rights goals of the ADA. We must, instead, view them as important tools for empowering people with disabilities to become gainfully employed.

Thank you for your efforts in realizing the promise of the ADA. Only by fully utilizing every contribution – advocacy, business, service organizations, government – can we achieve our goals. Together, we shall overcome.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

To succeed, we must be both vigilant in defending the ADA and persistent in implementing the law. I am pleased that the Supreme Court upheld the spirit of the ADA in recognizing that the unjustified isolation of institutionalized persons with disabilities is prohibited discrimination. But I am concerned that the way the Court defined disability may undermine the ADA's employment goals. **People may be trapped in a horrible catch-22: the employer claims that they are "too disabled" to work and, at the same time, that they are "not disabled enough" to be protected by the ADA. I have asked a number of agencies to explore various options to address the Court's decision, including pursuing litigation and recommending legislation.** We must work together to ensure that the ADA's original intent – to dismantle discrimination based on accumulated myths and fears – is sustained. No American – on account of race, ethnicity, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or disability – should be denied the opportunity to hold a job for which they are fully capable.

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Early in this century, disability was a central category for *excluding* immigrants from entering this country, similar to exclusions based on race and ethnicity. Now, we strive to promote *inclusion* for people with disabilities in all aspects of American society, just as we do for racial and ethnic minorities. For centuries, Americans have presumed that disability automatically meant a life of *dependence*. Now, we seek to fashion disability policy with the recognition that people with disabilities want to – and can – lead *independent* lives and contribute to our nation's prosperity. For far too long, we have encumbered disabled Americans with *paternalistic* policies that prevent them from reaching their potential. But now, we endeavor to *empower* individuals with the tools necessary for achieving their dreams.

As we celebrate the ninth anniversary of the ADA, let us remember just how far we have come. Because of the rights established in the ADA, IDEA, Rehabilitation Act, Telecommunications Accessibility Act, Fair Housing Act, and other laws, our society is now more accessible to people with disabilities than at any other time in our history. Like the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, disability advocacy has drawn our nation's attention to the pervasive stigma and discrimination faced by people with disabilities. Never before has disability been so prominently discussed in the mainstream media. We must use this rising level of awareness to infuse the values of the ADA – equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency – into all aspects of government and social policy.

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While the ADA has been a source of hope to our citizens with disabilities, it has not been enough to tackle the abominable rate of unemployment. My Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities is building on the ADA's foundation by developing a coordinated and active employment agenda for people with disabilities. This includes expanding our investment in assistive technology, providing meaningful access to quality health care, increasing the availability of affordable personal attendant services, leveling the playing field between



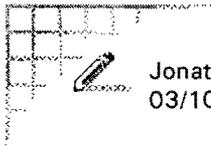
psychiatric and physical disabilities in Federal hiring practices, and creating small business opportunities. It also means enacting the Work Incentives Improvement Act into law. This legislation would take a small but profound step toward integrating our disability policy. We cannot think of income, health, and other services and supports as antithetical to the civil rights goals of the ADA. We must, instead, view them as important tools for empowering people with disabilities to become gainfully employed.

Thank you for your efforts in realizing the promise of the ADA. Only by fully utilizing every contribution – advocacy, business, service organizations, government – can we achieve our goals. Together, we shall overcome.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Disability -  
proclamation



Jonathan M. Young  
03/10/99 05:04:48 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Mary E. Cahill/WHO/EOP  
cc: Daniel W. Burkhardt/WHO/EOP, Cynthia A. Rice/OPD/EOP, Lisa M. Brown/OVP @ OVP  
Subject: Re: Disability History Month

I wanted to figure out whether a proclamation would be possible. And Dan's message affirms that it is. I just spoke with Cynthia Rice in DPC, and she thought it was a good idea as well. I will prepare an outline per Dan's request and seek your approval before circulating it to Cynthia Rice and Lisa Brown, and finally sending it on to Dan for Staff Secretary review.

----- Forwarded by Jonathan M. Young/WHO/EOP on 03/10/99 05:02 PM -----

Daniel W. Burkhardt



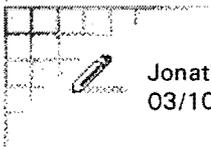
03/10/99 02:27:58 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jonathan M. Young/WHO/EOP  
cc: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message  
bcc:  
Subject: Re: Disability History Month 

Congressional action is not needed. The President could issue this on his own initiative. What I would like to get from you is an outline of what you would expect/like to see in the proclamation. I could then go to Phil Caplan, who signs off on new requests, to discuss it with him.

Thanks.  
Jonathan M. Young



Jonathan M. Young  
03/10/99 01:51:22 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Daniel W. Burkhardt/WHO/EOP, Delia A. Cohen/WHO/EOP, Maureen A. Hudson/WHO/EOP, Lana Dickey/WHO/EOP  
cc: Mary E. Cahill/WHO/EOP, Lisa M. Brown/OVP @ OVP  
Subject: Disability History Month

I'm exploring the possibility of proclaiming July "Disability History (or Heritage) Month." Lisa Brown

in OVP and Tony Coelho are both very supportive. What would need to be done to accomplish this? Does it require Congressional action or only a POTUS proclamation? Please advise. Thanks.

Jonathan

Message Copied To:

Delia A. Cohen/WHO/EOP  
Maureen A. Hudson/WHO/EOP  
Lana Dickey/WHO/EOP  
Mary E. Cahill/WHO/EOP  
lisa m. brown/ovp @ ovp