

January 2014 Status Update on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in the U. S. Congress

Reported by Powers, Pyles, Sutter & Verville, PC

The negotiations on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) are currently at a stand-still in Congress. The [U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations](#) last held a [hearing on the matter](#) on Thursday, 21 November 2013. During the hearing, testimony as given by Secretary of State John Kerry; Frances W. West, Worldwide Director, Human Ability & Accessibility Center; C. Boyden Gray, Former White House Counsel and Ambassador; Jeremy A. Rabkin, Professor at the George Mason University School of Law; and, Curtis A. Bradley, Professor at the Duke University School of Law School. The testimony is available to [download](#).

In December 2013, Senator Corker (R-TN), the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations walked out of the CRPD discussions, much to the dismay of Senator Menendez (D-NJ), the Committee Chair, and committee members including Senators Barrasso (R-WY) and McCain (R-AZ). Since then there has been no forward movement on the CRPD, but the disability community at-large continues to urge Congress to restart the dialogue.

On 22 January 2014, an [open letter on the stalled disability treaty vote](#) appeared in The Hill. In the op-ed, written by former Representative Tony Coelho (D-CA) and former Governor Tom Ridge (R-PA), the two legislators urge Senator Corker (R-TN) to return to the negotiating table and reconsider his position on the CPRD.

Organizations and individuals may advocate for the ratification of the CRPD directly to their Senators' offices. Individuals may also make calls or send emails to the Chair and Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Contact information is listed below.

Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Chair - Call 202-224-4744 and/or email [Margaret Taylor](#)
Senator Bob Corker (R-TN), Ranking Member - Call 202-224-3344 and/or email [John Zadrozny](#)