

Background

Every person has the right to self-determination, equality of opportunity, full participation in all aspects of community life, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency regardless of how significantly the person is impacted by a disability. Persons with disabilities include people of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and other identities across social and economic backgrounds. Persons with disabilities face disproportionate systemic barriers in healthcare, education, employment, community living, and other areas compared to people without disabilities. To further the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the U.S. Supreme Court's *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision, programs that provide services and supports must be aligned with principles of encouraging and supporting non-discrimination, full participation, and economic self-sufficiency. These programs must be accessible and available to those who need to use them and must be dependable, even in difficult economic times or during emergencies.

During the 119th Congress, AUCD will work to:

- Protect and enhance civil rights laws and their regulations, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.
- Protect the authority of and increase funding for federal government entities that enforce civil rights laws for people with disabilities, including the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the civil rights offices in the U.S. Departments of Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, Education, and Transportation.
- Ensure that community-based first responders have knowledge and training when responding to persons with disabilities who are experiencing behavioral and/or mental health crises.
- Address systemic inequities at the national, state, tribal, territorial, and local levels.
- Protect the voting rights and access included in the ADA, the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, the National Voter Registration Act, and the Voting Rights Act.
- Protect, enhance, and fully fund HAVA and its regulations to address the right of persons with disabilities to vote privately and independently in any federal election, to rectify continuing failures in implementation, and to make recommendations for improvement.
- Ensure that any new voting reform laws provide equal and full access to voting systems and polling places for voters with disabilities and do not disenfranchise voters with disabilities regardless of their guardianship status.