



## **Leading Disability Rights Groups File Amicus Brief Defending the Affordable Care Act in Supreme Court Case**

**Washington, D.C.** May 15, 2020 – The American Association of People with Disabilities, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, the Judge Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and 16 other leading disability rights organizations, represented pro bono by law firms Dentons and Baker Hostetler, this week filed an amicus brief with the US Supreme Court highlighting the crucial health care protections that Congress provided for people with disabilities in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA prevented people from being denied coverage or charged more due to pre-existing conditions and made coverage of needed services available and affordable to millions of people with disabilities for the first time. In March, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case, formerly known as *Texas v. US* and now known as *California v. Texas*, which it will hear in the fall.

The case involves a challenge by Texas and other states to the constitutionality of the ACA’s “individual mandate” to have health insurance. Texas argues that the mandate is unconstitutional and that the entire law must be struck down.

The Bazelon Center, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, and the ACLU were also counsel on the amicus brief.

“It would be a dark day for people with disabilities if the Court were to eliminate the ACA,” said Ted Kennedy Jr., chair of the board of the American Association of People with Disabilities. Maria Town, AAPD’s CEO, added, “For disabled people, the ACA has meant not only the opportunity to get needed healthcare, but also independence and, in many cases, the difference between life and death.”

“Congress clearly intended to provide protections for people with disabilities and would not have intended that the whole law be struck down even if one part of it was found invalid,” said Jennifer Mathis, Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

“With the ACA, Congress advanced the United States along the long road of ensuring healthcare equality for people with disabilities of all ages,” said Silvia Yee, Senior Staff Attorney for the

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund. “Our brief establishes how striking down the entire law thwarts the intent of Congress, deprives disabled Americans and their families of the health coverage they need to live full, productive and healthy lives in their communities, and hurts the entire nation.”

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