



Feb. 15, 2018

## STATEMENT ON THE PASSAGE OF H.R. 620 IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Bazelon Center condemns the passage by the House of Representatives of H.R. 620, the so-called ADA Education and Reform Act. The House today passed the bill by a vote of 225 to 192.

"If this bill were to become law, it would drive a stake through enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act's public accommodations provisions," said Jennifer Mathis, director of policy and legal advocacy at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law. The bill would remove any consequence for businesses that fail to comply with the ADA until they receive a written notice from a person with a disability who has been denied access, informing the business of its legal obligations and the specific violations that occurred. The business would then have six months to make "substantial progress" in removing the barrier.

"H.R. 620 would make it much harder for people with disabilities to enforce their right to access stores, restaurants, hotels, doctors' offices, homeless shelters, and other places of public accommodation," Mathis explained. "Twenty-eight years after the ADA was passed, businesses should be expected to know what it requires of them. It is absurd to require people with disabilities to shoulder the burden of educating businesses about their obligations." Said Bethany Lilly, deputy director of policy and legal advocacy, "this bill would make people with disabilities second-class citizens."

We call on the Senate to reject any legislation that weakens the ADA.