

July 2019

Celebrating the 29th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act

Today marks the 29th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, or the ADA. One of America's most comprehensive pieces of civil rights legislation, the ADA is a landmark civil rights law for people with disabilities. It bans discrimination in employment, state and local government services (including courts, school systems, disability and health service systems, child welfare systems, voting systems, jails and prisons, public transportation, and all other public services, programs and activities), and public accommodations (such as stores, restaurants, hotels, social service establishments, doctors' offices, private schools, private transportation systems, and other public accommodations). The Supreme Court's *Olmstead* decision, which affirmed the right of people with disabilities not to be needlessly institutionalized, was based on the ADA's "integration mandate."

Over the last 29 years, the ADA has made an enormous difference in the lives of millions of people with disabilities, opening the doors to allow people to participate fully in their communities. Much work remains to be done to accomplish the goals of the ADA, but it has transformed millions of lives.

The ADA is at the core of the Bazelon Center's work to advance equal opportunities for people with disabilities in all aspects of life, and to maximize autonomy, choice and dignity. This year, as we celebrate the ADA's anniversary, however, people with disabilities are facing continuous threats to roll back their key rights and protections. The Bazelon Center continues to fight to preserve, as well as advance, disability rights. We successfully fought legislative attacks on the ADA as well as on Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act, and stand ready to defend the rights of people with disabilities against similar attacks in the future. We continue to engage in advocacy to try to prevent administrative actions that undermine the rights of people with disabilities.

Disability rights are also at risk with the nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to serve on the Supreme Court. Judge Kavanaugh's appointment would significantly shift the direction of the Court and would threaten hard-won protections under the ADA, the Affordable Care Act, and other laws. Judge Kavanaugh has demonstrated hostility to the Affordable Care Act, to the rights of workers and others under the ADA, and to the ability of people with significant disabilities to exercise autonomy and choice. We will be releasing an overview of his record on disability rights shortly.

Help support The Bazelon Center in ensuring the rights of people with disabilities by visiting our website to make a gift <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/1405635>.