

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 20, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell,

It is our understanding that efforts are underway to move forward the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Disabilities Convention), and we write to register our opposition and respectfully urge you to oppose any efforts toward ratification.

As you may know, the Disabilities Convention established a body of unelected “experts,” the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which evaluates the compliance of state parties to the treaty every four years and issues recommendations for how they might improve in fulfilling their obligations. We are concerned that joining the Disabilities Convention will allow foreign experts to interfere with U.S. policymaking and violate the principles of U.S. sovereignty. Too often these U.N. treaty bodies seek to broaden the scope of the treaties that created them, expanding language in original agreements and disregarding national sovereignty.

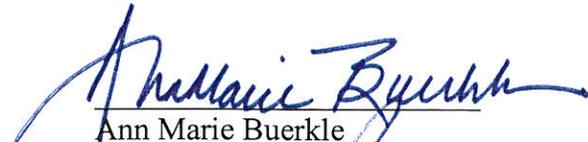
The language in the Disabilities Convention is troubling. For example, it lacks a clear definition of “disability,” which it defines as “an evolving concept.” This ambiguity invites abuse by persons or groups who do not suffer from a recognized medical disability, yet seek resources and protection under the authority of the Disabilities Convention and could complicate the implementation of the Disabilities Convention in the United States. Additionally, while the treaty’s main purpose is to ensure the rights and protections of the disabled, the Disabilities Convention revisits the debates regarding “reproductive health” as it relates to “abortion rights.” While Disabilities Convention signatories have claimed that the inclusion of the phrase “sexual and reproductive health” is not intended to include abortion, abortion advocates and U.N. officials have pointed to the Disabilities Convention as a means to further build their case in favor of abortion as a human right.

We are also concerned that Article 7 of the Disabilities Convention would give the government the ability to override the decisions of parents of disabled children if the government thinks that its views are "in the best interests of the child." This could strip parents of fundamental rights, including the ability to home school their child with disabilities if they believe it is in the best interests of their child.

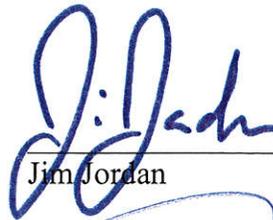
The U.S. already holds itself to a high standard of human rights. The rights of Americans with disabilities are well protected under existing law and are enforced by a range of state and federal agencies. Any modification or expansion of protections to Americans with disabilities should be achieved through the legislative process—not through an international treaty. Allowing an international panel of disability "experts" to scrutinize the U.S. record every four years would yield little or no benefit in realizing disability rights for Americans.

U.S. membership in the Disabilities Convention would not advance U.S. national interests at home or abroad. This treaty would subject the United States to further intrusion by U.N. officials into policies that are sensitive domestic and social issues. However, we remain convinced that the risks to the United States posed by the Disabilities Convention far outweigh any potential benefits that could be realized by U.S. ratification. We urge you to oppose any efforts to ratify this treaty.

Sincerely,



Ann Marie Buerkle



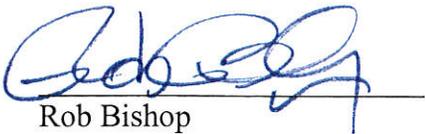
Jim Jordan



Michele Bachmann



Roscoe Bartlett



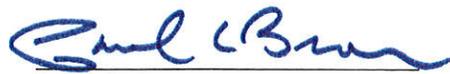
Rob Bishop



Marsha Blackburn



Mo Brooks



Paul C. Broun



Dan Burton

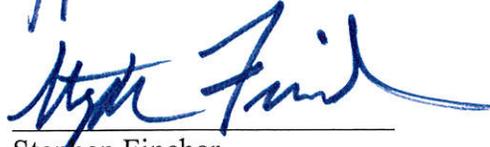


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John A. Culberson

  
Jeff Duncan

  
Renee Ellmers

  
Stephen Fincher

  
John Fleming

  
Trent Franks

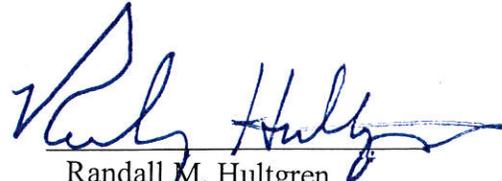
  
Louie Gohmert

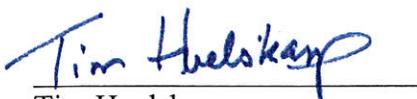
  
Bob Goodlatte

  
Trey Gowdy

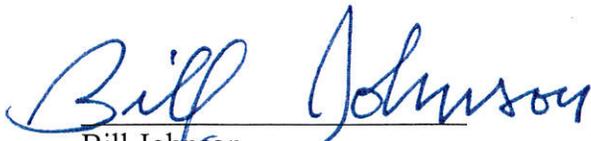
  
Tom Graves

  
Andy Harris

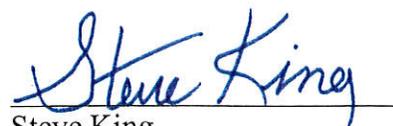
  
Randall M. Hultgren

  
Tim Huelskamp

  
Vicky Hartzler

  
Bill Johnson

  
Mike Kelly

  
Steve King

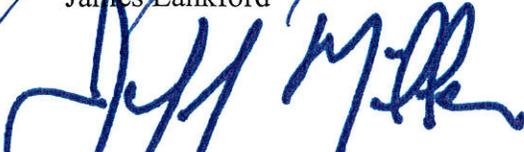
  
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John Kline

  
Doug Lamborn

  
James Lankford

  
Donald Manzullo

  
Jeff Miller

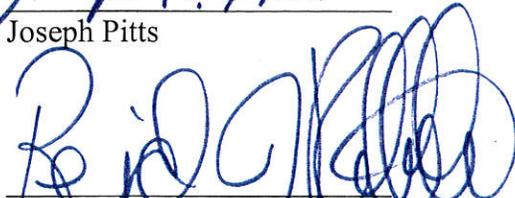
  
Joe Wilson

  
Randy Neugebauer

  
Alan Nunnelee

  
Joseph Pitts

  
Mike Pompeo

  
Reid Ribble

  
Scott Rigell

  
Phil Roe

  
Dennis Ross

  
Steve Scalise

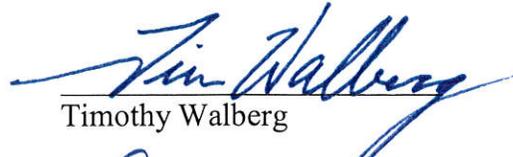
  
Jean Schmidt

  
Tim Scott

  
Lamar Smith



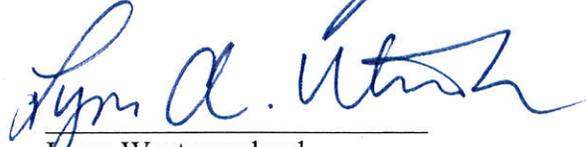
Marlin Stutzman



Timothy Walberg



Joe Walsh



Lynn Westmoreland