



Joint Resolution to Implement the ADA and Become Accessible, Welcoming Faith Communities

On July 26, 2015, the United States will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law in 1990 by President George H.W. Bush to ensure the civil rights of people with disabilities. This groundbreaking legislation established a clear and comprehensive national mandate to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities.

The ADA has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities by reducing barriers, changing perceptions, and increasing full participation in community life. However, the full promise of the ADA will only be reached if we remain committed to continue our efforts to fully implement the ADA.

Although religious organizations and the entities they control are exempt from some sections of the law, as institutions of faith we have always been governed by the mandates of love and justice. Under this higher authority, many congregations and other religious entities are creating accessible, welcoming environments for people with disabilities. When barriers of architecture, communication, and attitude are removed, God's justice and love prevail and people with disabilities become full participants in the celebrations and obligations of their faith.

The Christian Reformed Church in North America has supported a Disability Concerns ministry since the early 1980s, and in 1993 the CRC Synod heartily recommended "full compliance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act...and its accompanying regulations in all portions of the CRC located in the U.S. and Canada." Similarly, in 2008 the Reformed Church in America's General Synod established an "RCA ministry to, with, and for persons with disabilities and their families" in partnership with CRC Disability Concerns.

On the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the RCA and CRC will celebrate the progress that has been made by reaffirming the principles of equality and inclusion and recommitting through our collaborative efforts to establish congregations and communities in which people with disabilities are full, contributing members and citizens.

THEREFORE, we do hereby resolve that the Reformed Church in America and the Christian Reformed Church in North America will continue to work toward full ADA compliance in our communities and toward accessible, welcoming congregations and ministries, where everybody belongs and everybody serves.

Thomas R. De Vries
General Secretary, RCA

Steven Timmermans
Executive Director, CRC

Web resources:

faithanddisability.org/projects/ada-25th-anniversary/ideas-for-faith-communities/
faithanddisability.org/projects/ada-25th-anniversary/

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