

Money management

Housing

True accessibility

Disability visible or not

Healing drumming circle

Health & Wellness

Journal Self-determination

Speaking Matters

ARTS

Domestic Abuse Awareness



BARRIER FREE LIVING SURVIVORS SPEAKERS BUREAU

Originated by Women With Disabilities

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U.N. Treaty on the Rights of the Disabled

Voting no doesn't mean we lack compassion.

By Betsy Woodruff

Brace yourselves, everyone, because here's something that might be surprising: Elected officials who vote against the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities don't necessarily hate disabled people. Strange but true! In fact, a number of leaders in Washington vehemently oppose the treaty, and for good reason: Senate ratification wouldn't accomplish anything substantial for Americans. It wouldn't significantly improve the living conditions of disabled people overseas, and it could potentially undermine American sovereignty.

John Kerry, one of the treaty's main proponents in the Senate, has argued the opposite — that it won't change U.S. law and could make life easier for disabled Americans traveling overseas. And the treaty's supporters also emphasize that it has bipartisan support, from Senators John Barrasso and John McCain, among others. But it's drawn criticism from prominent congressional conservatives, including Senators Mike Lee, Jim DeMint, Rand Paul, and Pat Toomey. Rick Santorum

has also spoken out against the treaty, which prompted Dana Milbank to [write](#) for the *Washington Post* that his newest cause must be "opposing disabled people" — a statement so patently ridiculous that it's not worth dignifying with a response.

The treaty is intended to protect the rights of the disabled, but the United States already has the strongest legal defenses for them of any country in the world. The White House argues that if we ratify the treaty, other countries might be more likely to do so as well, which might improve the international protection of persons with disabilities. And that might make it more convenient for disabled Americans to travel in those countries.

"This is their argument, and it's such a ridiculous argument," says Steven Groves of the Heritage Foundation. "The premises are completely unsupportable. The notion that it might improve travel conditions for Americans traveling abroad is a complete non sequitur, and it has nothing to do with the treaty at all." In other words, the treaty does little to nothing for Americans.

Its defenders suggest that other nations will respect our excellent treatment of the disabled more if we sign the treaty, but that claim is largely unsubstantiated. "I'm un-

willing to indulge the unsupported assumption that that is true," Senator Mike Lee, a Republican from Utah, tells NATIONAL REVIEW ONLINE. "Simply because people have stated it over and over and over again doesn't make it true, especially when no one has been able to articulate, at least not to me, any sound basis for reaching that conclusion. I just don't believe it."

Groves is on the same page. "There is no American living here in the U.S. whose life will change one iota because the United States joins this treaty," he tells NRO. "So why the heck are we going to join it?"

That's a fair question, especially given the treaty's serious downsides.

Many conservatives oppose its ratification because of language in Article 4 that refers to economic, social, and cultural rights. The treaty says that each signatory should "take measures to the maximum of its available resources . . . with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of these rights." Our government, based on the Constitution, defines rights in terms of what the government *cannot* do to its citizens, not in terms of what it owes them. But the U.N. language emphasizes what the signatories owe to their citizens, what they must do in order to

protect these newly enumerated "rights." In the past, we rejected a treaty that referred to "economic, social, and cultural rights," while Soviet-bloc countries were quick to embrace such language.

And we haven't even started on how self-abasing it would be for the U.S. to comply with the treaty. Every four years, we would be required to put together an interagency report on our disability-rights record (a project that would cost millions), and also to send a delegation (usually of at least 20 people) to Geneva to appear before a panel of international disability-rights experts. Panels of this sort often vilify our country's human-rights record, according to Groves. "I've attended these sessions," he says. "They're absolutely insulting." He continues: "We have to go to Geneva for what I call our quadrennial spanking, spending millions in assets and sweat and labor to throw ourselves in front of this committee just to get smacked around and told we're doing a terrible, terrible job."

Senator Lee feels the same way. "We don't think that it's appropriate for the United States to be answering to a U.N. convention based in Geneva, Switzerland, when we are the leader of the world on this issue, as we are on so many other issues," he tells NRO. (continue on page 3)

Speaking Matters

Theresa McIntosh - Founder



Theresa McIntosh - No relation to the computer

Theresa is a mayoral appointee representing the voices of the victims at the mayor's office to combat domestic violence. She is a motivational speaker and a community educator on domestic violence in the disabled community. Theresa was given a 2nd chance at life and has made a magnificent glass of lemonade. Theresa story is truly about learning from one's mis-

takes and the resilience of the human spirit. Theresa came to Barrier Free Living in 1996 as a consumer and today she is not only a founder of the Barrier Free Living Speakers Bureau, she is also active on the Freedom House Board.

TOPICS:

- ◇ Accessing healthcare and the barriers that people with disabilities face.
- ◇ Physical and programmatic accessibility to the services for the disabled.
- ◇ Developing resource material for distribution
- ◇ Domestic violence workshops
- ◇ Physical and programmatic accessibility to the services for the disabled

Patrice C. Queen - Founding Organizer



Patrice C. Queen
Believes we need to be more real and inclusive when addressing DV issues

Facilitator of Forum Theatre, poet, writer public speaker, who uses the pen and open mic. to speak on the issues of domestic violence, incest, rape, abuse and injustice as well as gender.

Topics

- ◇ Child as DV Victim

- ◇ Sexual violence framed as incest
- ◇ Gender questioning as one outcome of childhood sexual violence
- ◇ Trafficking a hidden DV outcome
- ◇ Healing Drum Circle as medium to transform lives
- ◇ Domestic Violence Workshops

Mission

To advance the message, input and participation of survivors while telling our own story and creating the change we want to establish in

Vision

society.

Universally, reasonable accommodations and personal ingenuity brings each to their greatest potential. Free from exploitation

and intolerance, in which the barriers to housing, transportation, entrepreneurship, employment, social services, where people with disabilities have equal access in every

community, all the same, individuals with disabilities could overcome not only the barriers of the physical environment, cognitive, emotional, psychological and spiritual as well.

Volume 3 Issue 1

U.N. Treaty on the Rights of the Disabled

Continued from front page

So how much compassion members of Congress feel for disabled people should have zero bearing on whether or not they support the treaty. "There are a lot of people, myself included, who are instinctively very squeamish about such an agreement," Lee says. And those people are right to be. It's perfectly sensible to oppose the treaty for its ineffectiveness and for its insidious prioritization of positive rights — rights that place ever-growing responsi-

bilities on the government and the taxpayers who fund the government.

The Senate must have better things to do with its time than debate the merits of this proposal. Groves puts it bluntly: "My question is, Why are we bothering?"

— *Betsy Woodruff is a William F. Buckley Fellow at the National Review Institute.*

For Disabled New Yorkers, Effects From Hurricane Sandy to Linger For Months

Hurricane Sandy & the Disabled

Posted by admin on Nov 7, 2012 in Disability News



Creating Your Own Best-Care Scenario

What to keep in your first aid diabetes kit in case of emergency

I hadn't planned on running out of gas. Who does? I started: I checked my phone. For most people it rates, at best, as a major annoyance. But for people with diabetes, running out of gas in the middle of nowhere can quickly escalate from an annoyance to a life-threatening event. A bona fide emergency.

Now, I admit, when most of us think of emergencies, we think of disasters. Like Sandy. But that's what I call an Emergency Grande. You got it — Spanish for large, or widespread. And I don't mean to belittle how frightening and dangerous Sandy must have been for those in its path, but both poquito and grande emergencies are equally serious when it comes to your diabetes.

And the prescription to keep you alive in either case, is to accept that you are not immune from emergencies of any size, and to take an inoculation of emergency preparedness because events that are merely trying for others can be truly deadly for people with diabetes.

The key to keeping any emergency, grande or poquito, from becoming a diabetes disaster is to be prepared in advance. And it's really not that hard to do. You just need to be ready by having three different types of supplies on hand.

You need a daily "Go-bag" that's with you all the time and holds what you need to survive, diabetes-wise, for 48 hours. This is the prescription for an Emergency Poquito. You also need a stash of diabetes goodies at home that could carry you through two weeks of blizzard conditions, civil unrest, or plagues of locust. And finally, you need a grab-and-go kit to keep one step ahead of rising water.

Louis Pasteur said, "Chance favors the prepared in mind." I say, "Worst-case scenarios don't happen to prepared diabetics."



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Today's consumers are tomorrow's leaders

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will promptly respond

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Here are some things to consider in thinking about what entails a healthy relationship:

1. You have fun together
2. You are able to be yourself
3. You are able to have different opinions and interests
4. You listen to each other
5. You are both able to compromise, apologize and resolve disagreements
6. You don't spend all your time together. You are able to spend time alone or with your family and friends.
7. You are free to say "no" to the things you don't want to do.
8. You feel safe and unafraid to be with this person.
9. You feel free to see other friends and family when you need to or want to
10. You feel free to express your opinions and beliefs and to act upon them.
11. You feel free to change your mind.
12. You feel good about yourself when you are with that person.
13. You feel free to end the relationship if you want.

Healthy Relationship Checklist

A healthy relationship is being able to be yourself and do the things you enjoy without being coerced because you are in a relationship with someone else. You do not expect others to make you happy. You respect yourself and love yourself first. A healthy relationship entails having a good time with your partner but also allowing yourself to be comfortable on your own terms without the pressure of the other person. You are able to express your mind without fear of what he might do to you because you think differently, and you are able to say "no" to things you don't feel comfortable. You feel safe with the person and that person accepts you for who you are and not who he wants you to be for him. http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/relationships/healthy_relationship.html

Our contact information is

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Leave a message and we will
promptly respond

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Barrier Free Living

Family of Companies