

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Removing Access Barriers to Running for Elected Office for People with Disabilities Act

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)

Why is the Removing Access Barriers to Running for Elected Office for People with Disabilities Act needed?

People with disabilities are underrepresented in [all levels of elected office](#). One barrier to people with disabilities running for office is the threat of losing their federal disability benefits because campaigning for office can reduce or even disqualify a person with a disability from receiving federal benefits. The benefits at risk include Supplemental Security Income, Social Security Disability Insurance, and Medicaid. The possible loss of crucial supports reduces the likelihood that a person with a disability will consider running for office and reduces the number of people with disabilities able to participate in elected public service at local, state, and federal levels. The lack of elected officials with disabilities means that disability representation is missing when decisions are being made about transportation, housing, public lands, elections, emergency management, schooling and health care, all issues vital to people with disabilities. Better decisions are made when a diversity of voices are heard and are a part of the process.

Access to Federal Benefits for People with Disabilities Who Campaign for Elected Office

The *Removing Access Barriers to Running for Elected Office for People with Disabilities Act* would clarify to federal agencies administering federal disability benefits that campaigning for an elected office does not disqualify a person from receiving disability benefits. The bill will amend the Social Security Act to clarify that filing to run for an elected office and campaigning for an elected office is not considered work, substantial gainful activity or any other type of activity that would disqualify an otherwise eligible person from receiving federal disability benefits.

Supporting Organizations

Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Autism Society of America, Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, National Association of the Deaf, National Council on Independent Living, National Disability Rights Network, The Arc of the United States, United Spinal Association, Epilepsy Foundation, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs, Diverse Elders Coalition, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Caring Across Generations, American Federation of the Blind, Blinded Veterans Association, National Disability Institute, Disability Victory, New Disabled South, Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law, National Coalition on Accessible Voting, Progressive Turnout Project

Co-Sponsors

Senators Klobuchar, Gillibrand, Padilla, Welch, Van Hollen, Markey, Sanders, Merkley, Whitehouse, Fetterman, Hirono, Blumenthal, Duckworth, Booker