



Legislation Text

File #: RES 23-1136, **Version:** 1

Celebrating the 33rd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and pledging to create a city where people of all abilities can fully participate.

Whereas the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was preceded by decades of activism by many people and organizations that challenged the barriers that excluded people with disabilities from their communities; and

Whereas the ADA was introduced in the United States Senate in May of 1989 by Senators Tom Harkin, Ted Kennedy, and Dave Durenberger while the disability community mobilized, organizing a multi-layered strategy for passage; and

Whereas in February 1990, after a lengthy floor debate that lasted well into the night, the ADA overwhelmingly passed in the Senate (76-8) with bipartisan support; and

Whereas it would take an additional nine months for the bill to pass in the House of Representatives, having to be heard in four separate committees and seven subcommittees, allowing time for business associations to organize in opposition out of concern for the expense and fear of interminable litigation; and

Whereas disability activists fought amendment after amendment that sought to weaken the bill and ensured that each hearing room was full and that letters poured into Congressional offices; and

Whereas in March, to illustrate the barriers confronting disabled people, more than 60 activists set aside their crutches, wheelchairs, and walkers and began crawling up the 83 stone steps that led to the Capitol, an event which became known as the "Capitol Crawl;" and

Whereas the next day, activists met with House Speaker Tom Foley and other Congressional leaders, and when Speaker Foley refused to commit to a date of passage, activists chained their wheelchairs together inside the Capitol, spurring Capitol Police in riot gear to clear the Rotunda, use chain cutters to sever the chains, and arrest 104 people; and

Whereas after these events, the bill moved more quickly, and on July 12, 1990 the bill passed the House of Representatives; and

Whereas the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was finally signed into law on July 26, 1990 by President George H. W. Bush; and

Whereas with the ADA, the United States became the first country in the world to pass comprehensive protections for the basic civil rights of people with disabilities, outlawing discrimination against people with disabilities in schools, employment, transportation, and other key parts of civic life; and

Whereas the City Council affirms the principles of equality and inclusion for people with disabilities as embodied in the ADA and recognizes the many critical changes the ADA set into action; now, therefore, be it

Resolved the City Council celebrates the 33rd Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and commits to an active role in ensuring that people with disabilities can fully participate in public life in Saint Paul.

