

from the office of

*Senator Edward M. Kennedy
of Massachusetts*

STATEMENT OF SENATOR KENNEDY PRAISING SENATE PASSAGE OF
THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

For Immediate Release
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Today's action by the Senate marks an historic step in the long journey to complete the unfinished business of America and bring full civil rights and fair opportunity to all our citizens.

In a sense, this legislation is an emancipation proclamation for the disabled, and America will be a better, fairer, and stronger nation because of it.

43 million disabled men, women, and children will benefit from our action. For too long, they have been invisible Americans -- denied opportunity, victimized by prejudice, excluded from everyday activities of society.

Our message to America today is that disabled people are not unable. With all the challenges facing the country, we cannot afford to ignore the talent of the disabled, or neglect the skills they have to offer.

Mindless physical barriers and outdated social attitudes have made them second class citizens for too long. Now, with this legislation, they will have a fair chance to participate in the mainstream of American life.

This is a proud day in the history of civil rights. It is difficult to believe that this Congress will enact a more far-reaching or more important bill.

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