

5/14/17 PRESS ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHO: ADAPT
WHAT: National ADAPT Celebrates Women and Mothers
WHERE: The Capitol in front of the Capitol Reflecting Pool, Washington, DC
WHEN: Sunday, May 14, 2017

Advocates Celebrate Disabled Women, Disabled Mothers, and Mothers of Disabled People.

Hundreds of activists from the disability rights organization ADAPT descended upon the Nation's Capital this weekend to advocate for the rights of disabled Americans. These advocates took time on Mother's Day for a special ceremony to acknowledge and give thanks for the work that mothers and women have done to secure the equality of disabled people in America.

"We are here to honor the contributions of so many women who have done so much for disabled Americans," said Dawn Russell. "From the very beginning of this movement, disabled women have advocated on their own behalf. Disabled mothers have fought for the right to raise their own children. Mothers have raised disabled people to be advocates; have advocated for disabled people; have taught us how to advocate for ourselves. On this day, we acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to the many powerful women who have gone before us in this movement."

Advocates discussed the ways that existing systems of serving disabled people in America perpetuate oppression not only against disabled people but also against women. Low wages for personal attendants, the majority of whom are women, have meant that women who work full-time as attendants are paid a poverty wage for this valuable work. A labor shortage in attendants – caused in part by low wages – leaves many disabled people without necessary attendant services, and it is most often women who fill in as unpaid "informal" attendants because there are not enough paid ones.

The advocates spoke as well about the prospects for disability rights and women's rights under the Trump Administration. Significant caps and changes to Medicaid, passed two weeks ago by the House of Representatives, are likely to cause many disabled people to go without necessary services. Where possible, it is likely to be American women – mothers, daughters, and friends – who will perform that work informally.

"Ivanka Trump holds herself out as an advocate for working women," said Stephanie Woodward. "But it's not clear to me that she has considered what impact her father's policies will have on disabled women and on the women whose work supports the independence of disabled people."

ADAPT's history, the issues we are fighting for and our activities can be followed on our web site at www.adapt.org, our ADAPT Facebook page and on Twitter – look for #ADAPTandRESIST.

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