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ADAPT Thanks Rep Jim Sensenbrenner for introducing Disability Integration Act (DIA)

5/16/17, Washington, D.C. The national disability rights organization ADAPT expresses its sincere thanks to Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R) for introducing the Disability Integration Act (DIA) in the House of Representatives today. Disability advocates have worked for years on legislation which will secure the Constitutional right to liberty for disabled people and seniors. DIA is the fruit of those efforts.

“The passage of the ADA was a significant step forward in the fight for equal rights for Americans with disabilities,” said Congressman Sensenbrenner, “but almost twenty-seven years later, there are still problems that need to be solved. The Disability Integration Act identifies challenges that still exist and provides comprehensive and effective solutions that will help these individuals fully participate in daily life.”

“We are so grateful to Congressman Sensenbrenner for introducing this bill and for working with the Disability Community,” said Marilee Adamski-Smith, a Wisconsin resident and advocate who has worked closely with Sensenbrenner’s office on the introduction of the bill.

DIA was introduced in the House last year by Congressman Chris Gibson (R), who has since retired from Congress. Senator Chuck Schumer (D) has carried the bill in the Senate since its original introduction in 2015. Both Congressman Sensenbrenner and Senator Schumer, then a Congressman, supported the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, President George H.W. Bush’s signature domestic policy achievement.

“We are incredibly pleased to have strong support from Congressman Sensenbrenner and Senator Schumer, two Members of Congress with longstanding ties to our community,” said Adam Prizio, an advocate from Albany, New York. “In what feels like very polarized times, it is good to know that Democrats and Republicans can still work together on issues that affect all Americans. The Constitutional right to liberty is one of those issues.”

If passed, the DIA will express in Federal statute that disabled people who receive long term services and supports have a right to receive those services in the community, rather than being segregated away into expensive institutions and nursing facilities.

“This is a Constitutional issue for us, because if you are in an institution, you’re not free to come and go, to live your life, to work and to direct your own affairs. The institution controls your life,” said Bruce Darling, an organizer from Rochester, New York. “The way services are set up now, though, the only choice many disabled people have is whether to be a captive in an institution or go without services in the community. This bill fixes that, and we are so happy to be working with Congressman Sensenbrenner again to secure the rights 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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