

6/22/17 PRESS ALERT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For More Information:

Bruce Darling: (585) 370-6690

Mike Oxford: (785) 224-3865

Marilee Adamski-Smith: (715) 204-4152

WHO: ADAPT

WHAT: ADAPT is staging a Die-in at Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell's office

WHERE: 317 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510

WHEN: Thursday, June 22, 2017

Disability Advocates Protest Senate Leader Over Cuts to Medicaid for Millions of Elderly and Disabled Americans

June 22, 2017, Washington D.C. Today, about 60 members of the national disability rights organization ADAPT are staging a Die-in at Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's office. Advocates are protesting McConnell's Senate healthcare bill, demanding he bring an end to attacks on disabled people's freedom which are expected in the bill. "The American Health Care Act caps and significantly cuts Medicaid which will greatly reduce access to medical care and home and community based services for elderly and disabled Americans who will either die or be forced into institutions," said Bruce Darling, an ADAPT organizer taking part in the protest. "Our lives and liberty shouldn't be stolen to give a tax break to the wealthy. That's truly un-American."

"Not only will AHCA take away our freedom," said Dawn Russell, an ADAPT organizer from Colorado. "That lost freedom will also cost Americans much more money. The nursing facilities that people will be forced into are much more expensive than community-based services that AHCA would cut." In 2012, the National Council on Disability (an independent federal agency that makes policy recommendations to the President, Congress and federal agencies) reported that States spent upwards of \$300,000 more per person serving disabled people in institutions each year than they would spend providing equivalent services in the community.

The protest falls on the 18th anniversary of *Olmstead v. LC* the 1999 Supreme Court Ruling which first recognized disabled people's right to live in the community. ADAPT organizer Nancy Salandra of Pennsylvania was quick to note the connection between that case and the AHCA. "We fought so hard to have our right live in the community recognized and here we are 18 years later and we are still fighting for our freedom from incarceration."

As they dramatize the deaths AHCA's cuts and forced institutionalization will cause, and as Capitol Police close in, the advocates who came to McConnell's office from across the country chanted "I'd rather go to jail than die without Medicaid!"

"To say people will die under this law is not an exaggeration," said Mike Oxford, an ADAPT organizer from Kansas. "Home and community based services are what allow us to do our jobs, live our lives and raise our families. Without these services many disabled and elderly Americans **will** die. We won't let that happen."

On the 15th anniversary of the death of Justin Dart, the father of the ADA, his words ring true "get into politics as if your life depends upon it, cause it does."

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

###