



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

January 24, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, and Education
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chair Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

On behalf of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Technology and Telecommunications Task Force and the undersigned organizations, we would like to express our strong support for S. 2401, *The 21st Century Assistive Technology Act*, introduced by Senators Bob Casey (D-PA), Susan Collins (R-ME), Maggie Hassan (D-NH)(AT), and Kevin Cramer (R-ND). Further, we urge the full Senate to consider this bill and pass it in the very near future. It has been 17 years since the last reauthorization of the Assistive Technology Act and the pandemic has made it abundantly clear the urgent need to increase the capacity of the AT Act grantees (the State and Territory Assistive Technology and Protection and Advocacy for Assistive Technology (PAAT) programs), which the reauthorization would allow. This bill has the potential to ensure that both programs can build upon the work they are conducting, that no program will endure any cuts to their current funding and would benefit people with disabilities and the aging population across all States and Territories.

State AT Act programs operate in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and four territories, while the PAAT program operates in all those jurisdictions plus a 57 program serving the Hopi, Navajo, and San Juan Southern Paiute Nations in the Four Corners region. Both programs serve people with all types of disabilities, all ages, and in all environments (education, employment, community living and information technology). State AT programs provide a continuum of services that increase the access to, and acquisition of assistive technology through state financing activities (such as financial loans, cooperative buy, funds of last resort, etc.), device reutilization (including recycling, repair, refurbishment and device exchange), device loan/borrowing and device demonstration services. The PAAT programs

conduct trainings and provide needed advocacy for families and individuals with disabilities with medical providers, schools, employers, and communities to ensure that individuals have access to the assistive technology they need.

It is long overdue that this law be refreshed and modernized, and S. 2401 does just that. We strongly urge the Senate to consider and pass this bill in its current form expeditiously.

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of more than 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society. The Technology and Telecommunications Task Force focuses on national policy regarding matters of telecommunications and technology, including assistive technology, in order to help move society toward our ultimate goal of full inclusion for all people with a disability.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months as the reauthorization proceeds. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact one of the CCD Technology and Telecommunications Task Force Co-Chairs: Eric Buehlmann, eric.buehlmann@ndrn.org; Audrey Busch-Treussard, audrey.busch-treussard@ataporg.org; or Joseph Nahra, joseph.nahra@powerslaw.com; or Clark Rachfal, crachfal@acb.org.

Sincerely,

Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs
National Disability Rights Network
Perkins School for the Blind
American Council of the Blind
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
Assistive Technology Industry Association
Center for Learner Equity
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
CommunicationFIRST
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
American Physical Therapy Association
American Printing House for the Blind
Council of Administrators of Special Education
National Center for Learning Disabilities
RespectAbility
National Down Syndrome Society
The Advocacy Institute
TDI
Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE)
American Foundation for the Blind
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
The Arc of the United States
Council for Learning Disabilities

Council for Exceptional Children