

Resolution on observing anniversaries of the Letter Requesting Creation of the Seattle Commission for People With Disabilities, and of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act

WHEREAS there are nearly 1 in 5 U.S. residents (or 49.7 million people) with at least one disability (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000);

WHEREAS the population of people with disabilities is increasing among all age groups (Field & Jette, 2007);

WHEREAS census data, national polls, and other studies have documented that people with disabilities are more likely to be severely disadvantaged socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally (ADA, 1990);

WHEREAS persons with disabilities are often denied access to services, and are denied appropriate accommodations & resources to fully participate in education and training programs, employment, and the political process (e.g., Hauser, Maxwell-McCaw, Leigh, & Gutman, 2000; Roessler, & Sumner, 1997);

WHEREAS research has shown that a variety of psychological and sociological mechanisms jeopardize relationships between people with and without disabilities, increasing the likelihood of prejudice against individuals with disabilities, along with stereotyping, stigmatization, psychological discomfort, avoidance, and patronization (e.g., Banks & Kaschak, 2003; Fine & Asch, 1988; Katz, Hass, & Bailey, 1988; Longmore & Umansky, 2001; Wright, 1988);

WHEREAS research has been able to demonstrate significant deleterious health & mental health effects for victims of discrimination (e.g., Markowitz, 1998; Wahl, 1999; Williams & Williams-Morris, 2000);

WHEREAS some persons with disability also experience oppression due to their racial/ethnic identity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or gender expression (transgender, transsexual);

WHEREAS it is essential for members of the King County Democratic Central Committee (KCDCC) to understand how stereotypical & stigmatizing language, attitudes, and behaviors can demean & devalue people with disabilities & have an adverse impact on self concept, self esteem, self efficacy, & relationships with others;

WHEREAS the KCDCC has supported efforts to recognize the dignity and worth of all people, including their right to self-determination; has affirmed its opposition to discrimination and stereotyping based on age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity; has contributed to increasing awareness of discrimination and stereotyping based on age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, and ethnicity;

WHEREAS the KCDCC and other Democratic party organizations in Seattle, King County, and the state of Washington were instrumental in supporting the proposal to establish a Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities in 2009, which included a Letter to Mayor Nickels dated July 24, 2009, requesting the Commission's creation (available for viewing at www.megadutch.com/cesdc);

WHEREAS members of the Democratic Party across the nation were instrumental in the development and passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990 – a landmark piece of civil rights legislation;

WHEREAS Congress, in enacting the ADA, recognized that persons with disabilities have a history of being subjected to unequal treatment, and that the nation's goals regarding individuals with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency (ADA, 1990); intentionally provided a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities in addition to defining a central role for the federal government in enforcing the standards of the ADA on behalf of individuals with disabilities (ADA, 1990); recognized the critical need to address the unnecessary segregation of individuals with disabilities and concluded that failure to serve such individuals in the setting most appropriate to their needs is a form of discrimination (Olmstead v. L.C., 1999); and

WHEREAS despite the great strides that people with disabilities have made with the benefit of the ADA, barriers remain;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The KCDCC reaffirms its opposition to discrimination based on disability status, and promotes full implementation of the ADA; encourages the reduction of stigma and discrimination against people with visible and invisible disabilities through education and training; expresses support for activities at the state and federal level, and in international contexts where appropriate to ensure that the spirit and founding provisions of the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are maintained, implemented, and enforced;

The KCDCC honors the observance of this week of the first anniversary of the Letter to the Mayor of Seattle dated July 24, 2009, requesting the creation of a Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities, as well as the twentieth anniversary of the passage of the ADA on July 26, 1990; and the KCDCC Resolutions Secretar will send a copy of this resolution as approved, by electronic mail, to the WSDCC Chair and the WSDDIC Chair.

Approved at KCDCC monthly meeting July 27, 2010.