

# U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

## **The AID (Accessibility and Inclusion to Diversify) Local Government Leadership Act of 2024**

*U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-PA)*

### **Why is the AID Local Government Leadership Act Needed?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that [1 in 4 adults in the United States](#) has a disability. People with disabilities contribute to the workforce and their communities. Reasonable accommodations, including sign language interpretation and mobility devices, enable people with disabilities to serve their communities. However, barriers to full participation in civic and work life remain for people with disabilities. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the labor force participation rate of people with disabilities is consistently [half of that of people without disabilities](#). An area of American life where people with disabilities are underrepresented is in local elected office. The National Council on Independent Living has [highlighted this disparity at all levels of government](#).

One barrier to participation in local government is the lack of available funding for accommodations if a local elected official has a disability. Local governments that represent a small population or have high levels of poverty may not have the tax base to support budgets that fully fund the needed accommodations for a local elected official with a disability to perform their official duties. Without available accommodation funds, local citizens with disabilities may not be inclined to run for office and residents of communities may be concerned that accommodations will be too costly if a candidate with a disability is elected. To remove such barriers, local municipalities need support for these accommodations and incentives to create on-going accommodations funds to support elected and volunteer officials with disabilities to fulfill their official duties. Ensuring access to reasonable accommodations to perform official duties can help address barriers that affect people with disabilities from seeking elected office or appointed volunteer positions in their local governments.

### **Supporting Local Elected Official with Disabilities and Creating Accommodations Funds**

The AID (Accessibility and Inclusion to Diversify) Local Government Leadership Act will provide smaller local governments most likely to have limited budgets with a grant to support reasonable accommodations for local elected officials with disabilities. It also supports the government in creating an on-going accommodations fund to ensure current and future elected officials with disabilities have access to needed accommodations to perform their duties. This enables small municipalities to fulfill their Americans with Disabilities Act responsibilities to provide reasonable accommodations. Eligible communities include those that are rural communities, have a population of less than 10,000 people or are communities with a population between 10,000 and 200,000 with a federal poverty rate of 18 percent or higher.

## **Supporting Organizations**

Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Autism Society of America, Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation, National Association of the Deaf, National Council on Independent Living, National Disability Rights Network, The Arc of the United States, United Spinal Association, Epilepsy Foundation, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs, Diverse Elders Coalition, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Caring Across Generations, American Federation of the Blind, Blinded Veterans Association, National Disability Institute, Disability Victory, New Disabled South, National Coalition on Accessible Voting, Progressive Turnout Project

## **Co-Sponsors**

Senators Klobuchar, Gillibrand, Padilla, Welch, Van Hollen, Sanders, Brown, Fetterman, Hirono, Blumenthal, Duckworth