



May 6, 2021

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raphael Warnock
United States Senator
B40D Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Gillibrand and Warnock:

On behalf of the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), I write to express support for the Voter Empowerment Act of 2021 (S.954). We particularly appreciate the focus on disability access to the vote in Title II of the legislation.

ANCOR is a national, nonprofit trade association representing more than 1,600 private community providers of services to people with disabilities. Combined, we support over one million individuals with disabilities, and work to share policy, shape solutions and strengthen the community. Our members help people with disabilities live independent and fulfilling lives in the community, which includes helping them navigate the voting process and assert voting accessibility rights granted under the Help America Vote Act. As such, every election year we hear from our members about voting difficulties people with disabilities encounter.

These access challenges include: physical barriers, which are captured in a 2017 Government Accountability Office [report](#); inaccessible materials – including but not limited to lack of plain language resources; and polling staff / volunteers who do not understand or enforce voting rights. [According to Pew Charitable Trusts](#), this has led to a decline of people with disabilities' participation in elections. As such, we are grateful for the provisions in your legislation which would address many of these concerns and begin countering this trend.

Ultimately, an inclusive election process will lead to stronger policies, as the voices of individuals at the heart of those policies will be heard in every step of the political and policy process. We appreciate your recognition of the importance of disability voices in the Voter Empowerment Act of 2021.

If you have any questions on additional disability topics, I am happy to be a resource. Please reach out to me at smeek@ancor.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Long Meek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah Meek
Senior Director of Legislative Affairs

Cc: Senate Rules & Administration Committee Chairwoman Klobuchar
Senate Rules & Administration Committee Ranking Member Blunt