



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dec. 4, 2012

Contact: Diane Shinn, 703-264-9478, dianes@cec.sped.org

U.S. Senate Votes Down U.N. Convention on Persons with Disabilities
Special educators call vote not to ratify landmark civil rights treaty “missed opportunity”

**The following is a statement by
Margaret McLaughlin, President, The Council for Exceptional Children**

Today, the United States Senate voted not to ratify the United Nations Convention on Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The CRPD, the first-ever international treaty recognizing the rights of individuals with disabilities, reflects core American values and principles by promoting the dignity of the individual and rejecting discrimination based on disability.

Today’s vote is a missed opportunity for our country to remain on the international forefront of disability rights. In 1975 and again in 1990 with the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and American’s with Disabilities Act respectively, our nation took a bold stand in support of equal rights and protections for individuals with disabilities. It is a shame today’s vote did not reflect this past leadership.

Yesterday, we celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a day that commemorates continued global efforts to ensure an inclusive and accessible society for all. It is this inspiring message that we must remember today. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) – together with the disability, veterans, and business communities who were all supporting the CRPD – remains committed to continuing this struggle.

Numbering around 650 million, people with disabilities are the world’s largest minority, with approximately 10 percent of the world’s population having been identified as having a disability. In many parts of the world, this population has been discriminated against for centuries, lives in poverty and is the most disadvantaged among all minorities, experiencing the most extreme lack of access to education, independent living and employment. The CRPD has brought hope to persons with disabilities all over the world, and has been ratified by more than 120 countries.

CEC is grateful to the policymakers who have championed the CRPD, particularly Senators John Kerry (D-Mass.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.), and to all CEC members for their passion, advocacy and support of the CRPD.

CEC remains dedicated to the ratification of the U.N. Convention on Persons with Disabilities and to celebrating contributions to society made by persons with disabilities. CEC stands by its belief in the dignity and worth of all individuals, as well as the need for inclusiveness and social justice for all.

* * * * *

The Council for Exceptional Children is an international community of professionals who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC's mission is to improve, through excellence and advocacy, the education and quality of life for children and youth with exceptionalities and to enhance engagement of their families.

###