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Center for Persons With Disabilities

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HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, ADA!

July 20, 2011 by cpehrson

This month we celebrate the 21st anniversary of the creation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Twenty-one years of advocacy for the rights of people with disabilities is a noteworthy accomplishment. Yet, we still have a long way to go before the barriers for people with disabilities are all broken down.

The Census Bureau shed some light on a disturbing statistic this year—12 percent of people without a disability have not earned a high school diploma; that figure more than doubles to a discouraging 28 percent for students with disabilities. This statistic not only speaks to the struggles that schools are still addressing, but it impacts future issues that students with disabilities will face, such as post-secondary educational/training options, unemployment, and independence.

President Obama stated in his Proclamation on the Anniversary of the ADA (July 25, 2011), "...there is more work to be done and my Administration remains committed to ending all forms of discrimination and upholding the rights of Americans with disabilities...Together, we can ensure our country is not deprived of the full talents and contributions of the approximately 54 million Americans living with disabilities, and we will move forward with the work of providing pathways to opportunity to all of our people."

The ADA has made a significant difference in the world of disabilities. People with disabilities and their advocates continue to work towards equal opportunities for all. Let's hope that in the next decade, statistics will paint a different picture and it will truly be an occasion for celebration.