



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

July 26, 2015

Americans With Disabilities Act

On July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush proclaimed, “let the shameful wall of exclusion finally come tumbling down,” as he signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ensuring civil rights to individuals with disabilities.

Considered to be the first lawful affirmation for equal treatment of Americans with mental and physical disabilities, the ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in education, employment, government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and other vital areas of society.

We owe a debt of gratitude to those trailblazers who spoke out for what they believed and were brave enough to challenge the notion that people with disabilities were best institutionalized.

In 1975, I appointed one of those trailblazers, Ed Roberts, as Director of the Department of Rehabilitation where he remained until 1983. Throughout his career, Roberts’ leadership put California at the forefront of the disability rights’ movement.

During the week of July 26, 2015, California will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the ADA by reaffirming Disability Rights are Civil Rights.

The ADA has expanded opportunities for Americans with disabilities by reducing barriers, changing perceptions, and increasing full participation in community life.

As President Barack Obama recognized, “Nearly 25 years ago, the Americans with Disabilities Act codified the promise of an equal opportunity for everyone who worked hard, and in the years since, Americans with disabilities have reached extraordinary heights. But when employees with disabilities are passed over...it limits potential and threatens our democracy...more work must be done to achieve the spirit of what is one of the most comprehensive civil rights bills in the history of our country.”

Going forward, we must remember that the full promise of the ADA will only be reached if we remain committed to continue our efforts to ensure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Integration and inclusion is fundamental to achieving equality. We all benefit when Californians with disabilities can fully participate in activities in our state.

On the 25th anniversary of the ADA, California celebrates the progress that has been made and recommits our efforts to reach a day when no one will ever again be deprived of their basic guarantee to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Sincerely,



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.