

Disability Groups Closely Watching Supreme Court Case Challenging the Affordable Care Act

Washington, D.C. Nov. 9, 2020– National disability groups are closely following the Supreme Court’s consideration of the challenge to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) brought by Texas and 19 other states and supported by the Trump Administration. Texas argues that the ACA’s individual mandate is unconstitutional and that the entire law must be struck down. The Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case, *California v. Texas*, on Tuesday, November 10th.

The American Association of People with Disabilities, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, the Judge Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and 16 other leading disability rights organizations, represented pro bono by law firms Dentons and Baker Hostetler, filed an amicus brief with the US Supreme Court highlighting the crucial health care protections that Congress provided for people with disabilities in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ACA prevents people from being denied coverage or charged more due to pre-existing conditions and made coverage of needed services available and affordable to millions of people with disabilities for the first time.

“It would be a dark day for people with disabilities if the Court were to eliminate the ACA,” said Ted Kennedy Jr., chair of the board of the American Association of People with Disabilities. Maria Town, AAPD’s CEO, added, “For disabled people, the ACA has meant not only the opportunity to get needed healthcare, but also independence and, in many cases, the difference between life and death.”

“Congress clearly intended to provide protections for people with disabilities and would not have intended that the whole law be struck down even if one part of it was found invalid,” said Jennifer Mathis, Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

“With the ACA, Congress advanced the United States along the long road of ensuring healthcare equality for people with disabilities of all ages,” said Silvia Yee, Senior Staff Attorney for the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund. “Our brief establishes how striking down the entire law thwarts the intent of Congress, deprives disabled Americans and their families of the health coverage they need to live full, productive and healthy lives in their communities, and hurts the entire nation.”

"People with disabilities have long struggled to access healthcare that actually meets their needs," said Alison Barkoff, Director of Advocacy at the Center for Public Representation. "The

ACA's protections for people with pre-existing conditions, essential health benefits, and Medicaid expansion are tremendous advancements in that fight, and the ACA's importance to the disability community cannot be overstated."

Contacts:

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law: Amy Weiss, amy@weisspublicaffairs.com

American Association of People with Disabilities, Keri Gray, kgray@aapd.com

Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Lawrence Carter-Long, lcarterlong@dredf.org