

## **31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of ADA Assistant Secretary Statement**

Today, the nation celebrates the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the landmark civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, state and local government programs, transportation, businesses and nonprofit organizations that are open to the public, and, yes, many types of housing.

Since its passage in 1990, the ADA has empowered millions of Americans with disabilities to exercise their right to live, work, and pursue the American dream like anyone else. The ADA also empowers individuals with disabilities to seek relief when they encounter discrimination.

Every day, individuals with disabilities contribute to every aspect of our country's national life and economy, from art to law, science to business, and education to technology. But even as we acknowledge the gains that individuals with disabilities have achieved in the three decades since the ADA was signed into law, many obstacles remain. In HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, more than 60 percent of the complaints we receive allege disability discrimination.

And individuals with disabilities today face other tough realities that have proved very difficult to overcome, such as school bullying, health disparities, persistent high unemployment, a real shortage of affordable housing that is accessible to individuals with disabilities, and the ability to access the supportive services they need so they can live in the community with their family, friends and neighbors.

Now is not the time to rest on the progress of the past 31 years. It is through a steadfast commitment to enforcement of disability rights and equality for individuals with disabilities that HUD works to make our communities more inclusive and assists individuals who are marginalized to exercise independence and self-determination in all aspects of their lives. That is why we at HUD are rededicating ourselves to fully realizing the ADA's promise of equality of opportunity, full participation in American life, independent living, and economic empowerment for the more than 61 million Americans who have disabilities.

With the same spirited determination that was demonstrated in securing the law we celebrate today, let us work together to advance equality with a renewed commitment to justice for all.

Happy anniversary, ADA!

Jeanine Worden  
Acting Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing  
and Equal Opportunity