



**TALKING POINTS ON
REAUTHORIZATION OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
ASSISTANCE AND BILL OF RIGHTS (“DD”) ACT
(Public Law 106-402)**

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Background

NACDD is working collaboratively with Congress, with our sister agencies under the DD Act, and with the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities DD Act Task Force to lay the foundation for a successful reauthorization of the DD Act in 2007, including: the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD), representing the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) and the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), representing the Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agencies. Although key Congressional offices have not yet begun to focus on specifics of the upcoming DD Act reauthorization, **DD Councils and their grassroots networks need to begin to market themselves by highlighting disability issues and key Council projects and initiatives.** As NACDD and its partners begin to discuss DD Act reauthorization with Congress, it is clear that many Hill staffers are not aware of the Act and its components, including the purpose and mission of DD Councils. Congress will be faced in 2006-2007 with other health and disability legislation scheduled for reauthorization (e.g., Older Americans Act, Ryan White AIDS Act, Workforce Investment Act, and Rehabilitation Act), so it is imperative that Councils keep the DD Act on the Congressional radar screen.

The NACDD Reauthorization Working Group drafted recommendations for the new DD Act that were shared with the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD) and with our sister DD agencies. They are posted on the NACDD website under “Members Only.” The Working Group now is focusing on developing a legislative and grassroots strategy. We encourage all Councils to join the Working Group, particularly if your Council sits in a state with a Senator(s) and/or Representative(s) on key reauthorization Congressional Committees – Committees lists are posted on the NACDD website under “Public Policy.” We are not ready to share specific recommendations with Congressional offices, because the DD Act partners are working on a consensus statement so that we are all on the same page when we visit with Hill offices.

Key Congressional Committees for Reauthorization: House Energy and Commerce Committee, House Health Subcommittee (under Energy and Commerce Committee) Senate Health, Education Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee

NOTE: You may wish to ask your U.S. Senator or Representative to consider sponsoring the reauthorizing DD Act legislation or to sign on as a co-sponsor after the bill is introduced. Please see reverse side for CONGRESSIONAL TALKING POINTS.

NACDD TALKING POINTS FOR CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES

What is the DD Act?

Legislation with a 30-plus year history of promoting the full inclusion and participation of individuals with DD in all facets of community life.

- Explain that the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights (“DD”) Act (P.L. 106-402) is scheduled to be reauthorized in 2007 (provide the full name of the bill and bill number). Mention that the DD Act was last reauthorized in 2000
- Explain acronym “DD” – most staffers think it means “due diligence” (don’t use any acronym until you say the complete word.). Define “DD” (definition on NACDD fact sheets)
- Explain DD Act Guiding Principles: People with DD have the right to live independently, have control over their lives & participate fully in their communities (explain buzz words like “self-determination,” “inclusion,” and “integration.”) e.g., an individual with DD has the right to have friends, live where he/she wants, work, go to church/synagogue, own his/her own home, etc.)

[Note: the Voice of the Retarded (VOR) Capitol Hill Day is the week after NACDD’s. It is important to highlight why people with DD must be able to choose where they live...]

What are the Components of the DD Act?

(These programs are defined on the NACDD Reauthorization Fact Sheet)

- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils)
- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)
- Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Centers
- Projects of National Significance
- Family Support Program

What are DD Councils?

Explain what DD Councils are and what they do – highlight that they are state agencies, appointed by Governors (Hill offices like this.) Talk about disability issues specific to your state and the projects and initiatives of your Council. Tell your personal story or tell about the work you do in the DD community. Tell Congress the DD Act is:

- **Pro-Family:** Allows families to raise their kids with DD at home
- **Pro-State/Flexible:** Allows resources to be used in the states, based on *state-determined* needs and priorities
- **Pro-Accountability:** Requires a *high degree of accountability/measurable results* in programs
- **Bipartisan:** Has a long history of bipartisan support
- **Pro-Economy:** Creates/Expands necessary supports for individuals with DD to *become independent, productive members of their communities* (i.e., tax payers, not tax users)