



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs

Washington, DC 20420

(202) 461-7600

www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2013

Statement from Secretary Shinseki on the Disabilities Treaty

WASHINGTON -- Ratification of the Disabilities Treaty is important to our Nation's 5.5 million disabled Veterans.

Ratification of the Disabilities Treaty is not about changing America. It's about helping the rest of the world raise their accessibility standards to the gold standard the United States has set through our ADA. Ratification will help reinforce America's global leadership role and reputation, putting us in the strongest position to advance disability rights worldwide.

By joining the treaty, we will be helping the 5.5 million Veterans with disabilities and the 50 million Americans with disabilities study and work with dignity and pursue greater opportunity abroad with the same access they enjoy at home.

I served for roughly 10 years in Europe as a disabled Soldier following my tours in Vietnam. During that time, I had to learn to walk and run again. I had to convince the Army that I could continue to serve, and learn to adjust to a new reality. I recall the absence of aids for the disabled in many places where I served—ramps, lifts, automatic door openers, among other devices that are commonly available in this country.

Our disabled Veterans and service members have put their trust in our country. Now, it's time for our country to put its trust in them. It's time to ratify the Disabilities Treaty.

I urge the Senate to approve the Treaty this year.

#