

This deferral serves as evidence that the illegitimate military junta does indeed respond to international pressure, particularly from its neighbors. In the wake of this news, I renew my calls for countries in the region to pressure the junta to immediately and unconditionally release Aung San Suu Kyi and all prisoners of conscience in Burma and to continue their calls for political reform in that country; the United Nations Security Council to discuss and debate the threat the junta poses to its own people and the entire region; and the community of democracies to continue to keep freedom in Burma a top priority.

The assertion by the SPDC that the deferral will allow the generals to focus on the "democratization process" in Burma is as hollow as it is false.

The international community—especially the United States and the United Kingdom—must be clear that the junta will be judged not by what it says but by what it does. So long as Suu Kyi and other innocent Burmese remain imprisoned and without a voice in the political deliberations in Burma, there simply can be no credible democratization process in Rangoon.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

VOTE EXPLANATION

ADA'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I was not able to make the roll call vote on this resolution commemorating the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I had a family commitment that I had to keep, and I knew that this resolution would pass overwhelmingly, and I needed to be with my family.

I did want to take time to hail this special occasion and I want to reaffirm my strong support for the Americans with Disability Act. This historic legislation has helped to ensure that people with disabilities can have access to a wide range of programs and policies to help them fully participate in public life and culture. Over the years, I am proud of the progress our country has made in including people with disabilities in public places and events. This sweeping legislation is perhaps one of the most significant pieces of legislation since the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Under this bold law, people with disabilities were ensured nondiscrimination in employment and public accommodations, including transportation and telecommunications. Implementation has not been easy, and it is still ongoing. While meaningful progress has been made, there is still a great deal of work to do to achieve the bold goal of the Americans with Disability Act.

We must continue to push hard to end discrimination and fully embrace inclusion, but today we should also cel-

brate the strides made since 1990 on behalf of people with disabilities.

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today we celebrate the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990—one of the greatest civil rights laws in our history. Fifteen years ago, the Nation adopted the fundamental principle that people should be measured by what they can do, not what they can't. The Americans with Disabilities Act began a new era of opportunity for millions of disabled citizens who had been denied full and fair participation in society.

For generations, people with disabilities were pitied as people who needed charity, not opportunity. Out of ignorance, the Nation accepted discrimination for decades, and yielded to fear and prejudice. The passage of the ADA finally ended these condescending and suffocating attitudes—and widened the doors of opportunity for all people with disabilities.

The 15th anniversary of this landmark legislation is a time to reflect on how far we have come in improving the "real life" possibilities for the Nation's 56 million people with disabilities. In fact, the seeds were planted long before 1990.

In 1932, the United States elected a disabled person to the highest office in the land. He became one of the greatest Presidents in our history. But even Franklin Roosevelt felt compelled by the prejudice of his times and hid his disability as much as possible. The World War II generation began to change all that.

The 1940s and the 1950s introduced the Nation to a new class of Americans with disabilities—wounded and disabled veterans returning from war to an inaccessible society. Even before the war ended, rehabilitation medicine had been born. Disability advocacy organizations began to rise. Disability benefits were added to Social Security. Each decade since then has brought significant new progress and more change.

In the 1960s, Congress responded with new architectural standards, so we could have a society everyone could be a part of. No one would have to wait outside a new building because they were disabled.

The 1970s convinced us that greater opportunities for fuller participation in society were possible for the disabled. Congress responded with a range of steps to improve the lives of people with mental retardation, to support the right of children with disabilities to attend public schools, to guarantee the right of people with disabilities to vote in elections, and to insist on greater access to cultural and recreational programs in their communities.

The 1980s brought a new realization, however, that when we talk about help-

ing people with disabilities, we can't just rely on government programs. We need to involve private industry as well. Congress guaranteed fair housing opportunities for people with disabilities, required fair access to air travel, and made telecommunications advances available for people hard of hearing or deaf.

The crowning achievement in these decades of progress was passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and its promise of a new and better life to every disabled citizen, in which their disabilities would no longer put an end to their dreams.

As one eloquent citizen with a disability has said, "I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the State look after me. I want to take the calculated risk, to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I want to enjoy the benefits of my creations and face the world boldly, and say, this is what I have done."

Our families, our neighbors, and our friends with disabilities have taught us in ways no books can teach. The inclusion of people with disabilities enriches all our lives. My son Teddy continues to teach me every day the greatest lesson of all that disabled does not mean unable.

As the saying goes, when people are excluded from the social fabric of a community, it creates a hole—and when there is a hole, the entire fabric is weaker. It lacks richness, texture, and the strength that diversity brings. The fabric of our Nation is stronger today than it was 15 years ago, because people with disabilities are no longer left out and left behind. And because of that, America is a greater and better and fairer nation.

Today in this country we see the signs of the progress that mean so much in our ongoing efforts to include persons with disabilities in every aspect of life—the ramps beside the steps, the sidewalks with curb-cuts to accommodate wheelchairs, the lifts for helping disabled people to take buses to work or the store or to a movie.

Disabled students are no longer barred from schools and denied an education. They are learning and achieving at levels once thought impossible. They are graduating from high schools, enrolling in universities, joining the workforce, achieving their goals, enriching their communities and their country.

They have greater access than ever to the rehabilitation and training they need to be successfully employed and become productive, contributing members of their communities.

With the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act, we finally linked civil rights closely to health care. It isn't civil and it isn't right to send a disabled person to work without the health care they need and deserve.

These milestones show us that we are well on the way to fulfilling the promise of a new, better, and more inclusive