AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

July 26th is known as Americans with Disabilities Act Day. The day commemorates the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which marked its 30th anniversary in 2020, and is a key accomplishment in the long and ongoing Disability Rights Movement. The act ensures the equal treatment of people with disabilities by prohibiting discrimination in employment, services rendered by state and local governments, places of public accommodation, transportation, and telecommunications services.

The battle to pass the ADA was long and hard fought. In the 1980s, activists started lobbying to consolidate individual pieces of legislation that had been passed after decades of protests and activism into one broad statute akin to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Passage of the ADA was stalled until the “Capital Crawl” of March 12, 1990. On this day, over 60 protesters abandoned their mobility-assistance devices to crawl up the steps of the Capitol in an effort to demonstrate the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

The ADA was passed four months later.

(Lane v. Tennessee)