



*Bryan F. Cranna
Deputy Mayor
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Statement by Deputy Mayor Bryan F. Cranna

This year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act by former President George H. W. Bush. This historic and groundbreaking legislation has been instrumental in providing access for persons with disabilities.

Due to the ADA, accessibility is becoming the norm in society. It breaks barriers that prevent inclusion.

However, we will never see a completely barrier free society if there is not an end to the attitudes that exist surrounding people with disabilities. Inflammatory language and crude references create barriers as well. In many ways, these barriers are the hardest to break down.

That being said, I am appalled by the recent derogatory comments by White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel; in which he referred to members of his own political party with a slur that is offensive to individuals with developmental disabilities. This statement follows a similar derogatory comment made by President Obama, in which he referenced the Special Olympics in a joke.

Individuals with disabilities should not be defined by their disability; it is simply a part of who they are. They are a person with a disability, not a disabled person. However, understanding and accepting that fact will never be the norm if we continue to hear jokes and insults referencing persons with disabilities.

President Obama and White House staff members have the ability to break down these barriers, as they have the world's ear on a daily basis. They should not waste those opportunities.

Deputy Mayor Bryan F. Cranna
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