



MICHIGAN
CENTERS
FOR
INDEPENDENT
LIVING



A NETWORK OF SOLUTIONS January 14, 2003

1476 Haslett Road
Haslett, Michigan 48840
Voice/TTY (517) 333-4253 • FAX (517) 333-4244

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
United States Senator
433 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

I write on behalf of the Michigan Association of Centers for Independent Living (MACIL), a statewide network of local community-based organizations of people with disabilities to remove barriers to our participation in the economic and social life of our communities.

MACIL is opposed to the confirmation of Jeffrey S. Sutton to the Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. His record is a pattern of efforts to override the intent of Congress and to undermine the spirit and purpose of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and other civil rights laws. In spite of the extensive historical record of state-sanctioned discrimination against individuals with disabilities, Sutton has argued that the protections of the ADA were "not needed" and believes that states should be the "principal bulwark in protecting civil liberties".

In his aggressive espousal of the cause of federalism and in the guise of promoting a theory of limited government, Sutton has attempted in the federal courts to dismantle one by one the core protections for people with disabilities enacted by Congress. MACIL urges you to oppose his appointment and instead keep faith with the declaration of President George W. Bush when he launched his New Freedom Initiative:

"I am committed to tearing down the remaining barriers to equality that face Americans with disabilities today. My New Freedom Initiative will help Americans with disabilities by increasing access to assistive technologies, expanding educational opportunities, increasing the ability of Americans with disabilities to integrate into the workforce, and promoting increased access into daily community life."

Thank you,

Liz O'Hara
Executive Director

Michigan Association of Centers for Independent Living

Ann Arbor CIL • Blue Water CIL, Port Huron • Capital Area CIL, Lansing
The Disability Network, Flint • Grand Rapids CIL • Great Lakes CIL, Detroit • The Disability Resource Center, Kalamazoo
Lakeshore CIL, Holland • Center for Independent Living of Mid-Michigan, Midland • Oakland & Macomb CIL, Sterling Heights
Associate Members: Bay Area Coalition for IL, Traverse City • Disability Awareness CIL, Muskegon • Superior Alliance for IL, Marquette