



September 20, 2020

Statement on the Passing of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

The Center for Public Representation mourns the loss of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who passed away on September 18 at the age of 87. Throughout her life, Justice Ginsburg was a champion for justice and equality for all, including people with disabilities. Her work has and will continue to better the lives of people with disabilities around the country for years to come.

In 1999, as the author of the majority opinion in [*Olmstead v. L.C.*](#), Justice Ginsburg affirmed that people with disabilities have a civil right to live, work and participate in their communities and found that unjustified segregation of people with disabilities is a type of discrimination prohibited by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). She aptly described the harms caused by segregating people with disabilities from their communities: it “perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life” and “diminishes the everyday life activities of individuals, including family relations, social contacts, work options, economic independence, educational advancement, and cultural enrichment.” That groundbreaking decision has drastically changed the landscape for people with disabilities over the last 21 years, and continues to be a cornerstone of disability law.

Justice Ginsburg’s jurisprudence recognized the insidiousness of discrimination and the need to confront that to fully live up to our country’s values. As she said so eloquently in her concurrence in the 2004 case, [*Tennessee v. Lane*](#), “Including individuals with disabilities among people who count in composing ‘We the People,’ Congress understood in shaping the ADA, would sometimes require not blindfolded equality, but responsiveness to difference; not indifference, but accommodation. . . . The Court [must be] faithful to the Act’s demand for reasonable accommodation to secure access and avoid exclusion.”

Her loss is one that is acutely felt within the disability community, and we are forever grateful for her unwavering commitment to equality. May her memory be a revolution.