

Monday marked the 20th anniversary of the landmark [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA). Prior to this law's enactment, disabled Americans experienced discrimination in almost all aspects of society. They were denied educational opportunities and employment, denied access to buildings and transportation, and denied basic civil rights.

In passing the ADA in 1990, Congress strove to provide people with disabilities full participation in society, defeating the false stereotype that they would not be able to live and work independently and self-sufficiently. Today, more than 50 million Americans with physical or mental impairments legally are protected from discrimination in the areas of employment, public accommodation, public services, transportation, and telecommunications. Two years ago, we [strengthened the ADA](#) by passing legislation broadening coverage to individuals with disabilities who had been excluded from protection as a result of several Supreme Court decisions.

Our nation has come a long way since the passage of the ADA. Prior to the law's enactment, even the halls of Congress were not accessible to disabled Americans. On Monday, Congressman Langevin (RI-02), the first quadriplegic to serve in Congress, [presided over the House](#), marking the first time a Member in a wheelchair ever has presided over the House of Representatives. Yet, the promise of the ADA has not been fully realized. The unemployment rate for disabled people in the U.S. is at 14.3 percent, well over the national average. While the ADA fundamentally changed the perceptions and expectations of disabled Americans' roles and has opened doors that had been closed, there is still more work to be done to ensure all Americans, regardless of disability, receive the full rights they deserve.

Setting the Record Straight on Social Security

A recent [Gallup poll](#) found that 60 percent of Americans who have not retired believe that they'll never receive a single Social Security payment. This finding is alarming because it's not grounded in reality – Social Security is in pretty good shape. According to the two independent trustees overseeing the Social Security and Medicare programs, without any changes at all the Social Security program can pay all benefits through at least 2037. In other words, 2037 would

be the first year that Social Security might not be able to pay 100 percent of all expected benefits. After that, it could still pay about 76 percent of benefits. Congress and the President need to fine tune the system to make up for that last 24 percent, not upset the program that has worked so well for so long.

Privatizing Social Security and replacing it with higher risk investment accounts is certainly not the answer. Instead, we should work to [strengthen Social Security's long-term finances](#) so that it continues to provide a reliable, guaranteed base of retirement, disability and survivor's income. For 75 years, Social Security has helped to tie this country together. We must not forget that as some in Congress propose a you-are-on-your-own system of riskier investments.

National Farmers Market Week

The United States and New Jersey Departments of Agriculture have designated August 1-7 as [Farmers Market Week](#). Throughout the year, farmers markets provide affordable, fresh, and healthy products. You can view a list of New Jersey farmers markets [here](#).

Farmers play such a vital role in our communities. I'm supporting them in Congress by working to fund [Farm to School programs](#) that enable farmers to bring locally or regionally grown fresh produce into schools, significantly improving nutrition for children eating school lunches. I've also backed [Community Supported Agriculture](#) programs, which allow consumers to purchase a farm share in exchange for a weekly delivery of fresh, seasonal produce.

Telephone Townhall Reminder

I am hosting my next telephone town hall on Monday, August 2 at 7:20 p.m. To sign up to receive a call, please call 1-87-RUSH-HOLT. I look forward to hearing from you.