



July 11, 2025

The Honorable Suzanne Bonamici  
2231 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kim Schrier  
1110 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Courtney  
2449 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives Bonamici, Courtney, and Schrier:

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) empowers individuals with Down syndrome and their families by driving policy change, providing resources, engaging with local communities, and shifting public perceptions. We write today in strong support of the passage of the *Respond, Innovate, Succeed, and Empower (RISE) Act of 2025* (H.R. 3939), which would streamline the documentation process for students with disabilities seeking accommodations in institutions of higher education.

The RISE Act aims to allow college students to use previous documentation as proof of having a disability when seeking accommodation in their courses, making these accommodations more affordable and accessible. Currently, only 17% of students with a learning disability are reported as having received some form of accommodation at the postsecondary level, which is a sizable decline from the 94% who receive accommodations in high school.<sup>1</sup> The primary cause for this decline is the burdensome requirements in higher education which often force students with disabilities and their families to get a new evaluation to prove their disability when enrolling in college classes. This legislation also provides \$10 million in funding for the National Center for Information and Technical Support for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities to help these students and their families learn how to access the accommodations they need for academic success.

Students with Down syndrome are increasingly pursuing higher education whether through inclusive postsecondary programs or traditional degree pathways. Ensuring that students with Down syndrome and other disabilities have equitable access to necessary accommodations is essential to supporting their success.

NDSS strives to ensure all individuals with Down syndrome are guaranteed their human rights and valued by a more inclusive society. Consistent with our many years of leadership and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ncld.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/RISE-Act-Overview-Updated-Sept.-2023.pdf>



advocacy in support of inclusive education, we urge Congress to take action on the RISE Act, and we thank you for your leadership regarding this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kandi Pickard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, looping "O" at the end.

Kandi Pickard  
President and CEO  
National Down Syndrome Society