



March 15, 2001

RE: ADVOCACY PACKET for the April 17<sup>th</sup> Leave Out for Equal Justice

To All Participants, Co-Sponsors, and Allies:

Thank you for your interest in the **April 17<sup>th</sup> nationwide Leave Out for Equal Justice**, sponsored by the National Disabled Students Union (NDSU). With a little over 4 weeks until the protest, preparations are currently in full swing to ensure a coordinated, organized, and successful action that will deliver a powerful message to the Supreme Court of the United States that any elevation of “states’ rights” over civil rights in this country will not be tolerated.

Phase 1 of the protest preparations involves the widespread dissemination of the documents in the enclosed Advocacy Packet. This Advocacy Packet includes:

1. **A targeted flyer** announcing the April 17<sup>th</sup> Leave Out specifically geared to your particular constituency.

There are four targeted flyers available: 1) for [students](#), 2) for [parents of youth with disabilities](#), 3) for the [disability community](#) in general, and 4) for our [natural allies](#). If you would like any of these flyers (in addition to the one you received in this packet), please feel free to ask and we will be more than happy to send them out right away.

2. A sheet with [ideas for leave-out organizers](#)
3. A sheet describing [the meaning of the NDSU symbol](#) – **THE BRAID**
4. A **description of NDSU and our formal [Mission Statement](#)**
5. A copy of the [invitation to join the NDSU listserv](#)

In approximately a week and a half, we will distribute a **Media Packet** that will include step-by-step strategies for working with the media, sample materials you can modify as appropriate for your local media outlets, and other related materials. This packet will also include a national petition, as well as a model state petition, for distribution in your particular state.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Sarah Triano at 773-463-4776 (V or Relay) or at <mailto:strian1@uic.edu>.

In Solidarity,  
Members of the NDSU Leadership Team

**Co-Sponsors for this Event Include:**

Access Living of Chicago, IL, ADA Watch, **ADAPT LA (ADAPT of So. California)**, ADAPT Montana, Alliance for Disability and Students of the University of Montana (ADSUM), American Association of People with Disabilities, American Psychological Association Graduate Students (APAGS), Chapman University Organization for Disability Disability Advocacy & Awareness, Chicago ADAPT, Citizens for Legitimate Government, Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in IL, Disability Advocates of Minorities Organization, Disabled Students Union at the University of California, Berkeley (DSU), Disabled Students Union at the University of Illinois at Chicago (DSU), IMPACT, Inc. of Alton, IL, Justice for All, Kids as Self-Advocates, Lake County Center for Independent Living, MCS: Health and Environment, Monroe County Women’s Disability Network, National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems, National Council on Independent Living, National Strike One, Not Dead Yet, On A Roll Radio, PACER Center, Progress Center for Independent Living of Forest Park, IL, Suburban Access Squad, The Associated Blind, Inc., The Independent Living Resource Center San Francisco, The PhD Program in Disability Studies at UIC, UIC Circle Greens, UIC College Democrats, UIC Department of Disability and Human Development



**The National Disabled Students Union (NDSU) is a national, cross-disability, student organization.** We recognize all disabled people -- those with traditionally recognized disabilities and those who have often been left out of the movement -- as our brothers and sisters, and we recognize all students -- those who work to learn, whether or not they are at recognized schools -- as our colleagues.

**The NDSU was founded on February 21, 2001**, in response to the US Supreme Court decision limiting the enforcement of Title I of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (*Board of Trustees of the University of Alabama et al. v. Garrett et al.*). Students with disabilities throughout the United States recognize the far-reaching impact of this decision, and we oppose the Supreme Court's pattern of undercutting civil rights legislation in America. Although the Garrett decision still requires the states to treat disabled and nondisabled employees equally, it makes enforcement more difficult.

**The US Supreme Court has weakened other civil rights laws** besides the ADA (including the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Violence Against Women Act), and we are concerned about this trend. We wonder whose rights are next and how long we will have the guarantee of equality. We are committed to everyone's right to equal protection under the law and equal rights within society, and we don't want to wake up a year or a decade from now wishing we'd acted earlier.

**We recognized the need for a concerted, nation-wide response** that would put the Supreme Court -- and the rest of the American public -- on notice that students with disabilities in this country will no longer accept anything less than full participation, full equality, full justice, and the full dignity and respect that we (and all people) deserve as equal human beings. On Tuesday, April 17, 2001, we will come together with our allies in a nationwide demonstration of our opposition to the Court's actions.

**We will mobilize and organize students with disabilities** throughout the nation in order to continue the legacy of empowerment and community solidarity that is our heritage. As one of the great leaders of our movement, Justin Dart, once said, "We are here, we are united, and we are proud." We will work to ensure that all disabled students have the opportunities they need to learn, the opportunities they need to live and work, and the opportunities they need to be full participants in their communities and full members of American society.

For more information, **contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or [773-463-4776](tel:773-463-4776)**

## THE MEANING OF THE NDSU SYMBOL



### Braid

Marlin Thomas

Colors For Unity  
Textures For  
Diversity  
Woven  
Into  
Our Consciousness  
Woven  
Into  
Our Souls  
Woven  
Into  
Our History  
Woven  
Into  
Our Movement  
Woven  
Into  
Our World  
Woven  
Into  
Existence  
Woven  
Into  
Each Other

### Braid

Cal Montgomery

Throughout history, people have used symbols to identify themselves. Sometimes these are public symbols, to demonstrate support for a cause to everyone; sometimes they are private symbols, to allow people to identify themselves to others like them. Think of the marked doors in the Passover story, of the brightly lit candle in the window in the history of the Underground Railroad. Think of the obscure symbols on buttons; think of the school logos on students' ballcaps; think of the familiar ways of speaking that tell you the stranger in front of you is a friend.

Throughout history, people have used symbols to identify themselves. We use a braid to demonstrate our commitment to the way a diverse group of strands can come together to make something strong and sure. We use a braid to symbolize the many different fabrics out of which the disability cloth is made. We use a braid to symbolize the many different threads in our communities that, together, make a thick rope.

Throughout history, there have been symbols: ours is a braid.

**Purple**, For Pride. In Ourselves, History, and Disability

**Green**, For Grassroots. Growing from Souls to Strong Plants

**Orange**, For Perseverance. In the Fight for Our Equal Rights

*Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.*

*A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:12*

## Ideas for Leave-Out Organizers

We are a rich and diverse community, and we expect a rich and diverse range of demonstrations, in which we will teach and learn about our community, about our struggles, and about our allies' struggles. Every different person, every different group, every different community will add a thread to our human braid; and the braid will be stronger than any of us alone. Here are some suggestions:

- ◇ On college campuses across the country, students will be simultaneously “leaving out” of their classes and congregating at one central spot. Many local activists will be joining in the Leave-Outs at nearby schools.
- ◇ An elementary school activist has decided to organize a petition drive at her school, asking other students to think seriously about disability rights and to show their support.
- ◇ Some students whose campuses will be on Spring Break on April 17 will hold Leave-Outs or Teach-Ins or petition drives in their communities.
- ◇ CILs, clubhouses, and other community groups may wish to host Teach-Ins for students and their families, and for other members of their communities. At these Teach-Ins people can discuss the Garrett decision and its implications and the disability rights movement, make braids in support of a strong and diverse movement made of many threads, and work together to build and strengthen the human braid.
- ◇ Display your own braid on April 17, in your hair, on your shirt, on your front door, or anywhere, to symbolize your support and membership in the human braid.
- ◇ Some groups may wish to hold Teach-Ins where many civil rights issues are discussed, and where people from many different backgrounds and different movements can teach each other and learn from each other.
- ◇ Writers can write op-ed pieces and letters to the editor, and submit them to local newspapers. Groups can work together on letter-writing campaigns to state legislators, urging that the protections we have lost nationally be reinstated at the state level. Groups can come together to make music or art to celebrate our communities and remind people that there is strength in diversity.
- ◇ Groups may choose to have marches or rallies.
- ◇ One activist is organizing a virtual teach-in on the web.
- ◇ Some individuals may participate in the Leave-Out as individuals, knowing that at the same time, people all across the nation are doing the same thing.
- ◇ You may have ideas we haven't thought about yet – do you?

**Whatever you do, we want to hear about it.** We'd love to know what you're planning: we can offer you some help in organizing and in trying to get local media to cover your event, and if we know of anyone else working on the Leave-Out in your community, we can help you connect. And we'd love to hear, afterward, how it went, and see any media coverage that you might have gotten. We will all learn from each other, and together we will create something wonderful.

## **We hold this truth to be self-evident: that all of us are created equal.**

Patricia Garrett got breast cancer. Then she got fired.

This is a story that's all too familiar to people with disabilities. If you're disabled, other people assume it's okay to pass you over, turn you down, and leave you out. They assume you're not quite as equal as everyone else and it's okay to treat you that way.

Ten years ago, our activists fought long and hard to win the right to be treated equally. They got the Americans with Disabilities Act passed, and they got it signed into law. For the last ten years, our activists have been fighting to get the law enforced, to get the benefits the law promises. And now the Supreme Court has made that fight harder, by ruling that state employees can't recover damages when their Title I rights are violated.

## **LEAVE OUT**

with the National Disabled Student Union on Tuesday, April 17, 2001

We are students, adults, professionals, sisters, brothers, mothers, fathers, and we are **People with Disabilities** (in bold strong colors, ringing out in song, beating strong rhythms). The Garrett case is not the beginning and it is not the end, but **it is the time** to show that we will not *let* anything happen to our rights; we will fight to make and keep our rights equal. As we know from the past, justice will not be given to us. We must demand it because it is simply Our Right To Equality.

On April 16, you will join people across the nation in paying your share of state taxes.  
On April 17, join people with disabilities across the nation to call for your share of the benefits.

On April 17, 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded in Raleigh, North Carolina. SNCC became a major civil rights force in the United States, but the legacy of SNCC and other civil rights groups is being eroded by a Supreme Court insistent on weakening our rights in the name of "states' rights." 41 years after the birth of SNCC, students are speaking out for justice again. The National Disabled Student Union asks you to join with us to call -- again -- for all people to be treated with justice and fairness as equals.

We're tired of being left out, and on April 17 we're leaving out. **At 1pm Eastern (noon Central, 11am Mountain, 10am Pacific) on April 17, disabled students and our allies will "leave out"** of our schools, our jobs, and our homes, to remind the government that when business as usual means discrimination, we want no part of it.

If you want more information about participating in the national demonstration or if you want to organize some other activity in your area to demonstrate your opposition, please contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or 773-463-4776. An Advocacy Packet and a Media Toolkit are available upon request.

## No-One Should Be Left Out

### LEAVE OUT

with the National Disabled Student Union on Tuesday, April 17, 2001

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which says that disabled people -- who have historically been left out of schools, jobs, and communities -- have the same rights as anyone else in this country. Schools, employers, and places of public accommodation, the ADA says, may no longer leave us out. The ADA follows in the tradition of earlier laws like IDEA in demanding that all of us be able to live and learn and grow and give in our own communities.

Last year the Supreme Court weakened the **Violence Against Women Act**. Then they went after the **Age Discrimination in Employment Act**. And now, in yet another decision that weakens the guarantee of full membership in society, the Supreme Court has decided that even though states have to comply with the ADA, state employees can't recover money damages when they've been discriminated against. This will make it easier for the states to break their promises to people with disabilities and our families. It will make it easier for the states to leave people out. **And we have to wonder: who's next?**

We're tired of people being left out, and on April 17 we're leaving out. **At 1pm Eastern (noon Central, 11am Mountain, 10am Pacific) on April 17, disabled students and our allies will "leave out"** of our schools, our jobs, and our homes, to remind the government that no-one should be left out.

**Our Families. Our Communities. Our Taxes. Our Government.**

On April 17, 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded in Raleigh, North Carolina. SNCC became a major civil rights force in the United States, but the legacy of SNCC and other civil rights groups is being eroded by a Supreme Court insistent on weakening our rights in the name of "states' rights." 41 years after the birth of SNCC, we ask you to join with us to call -- again -- for all people to be treated with justice and fairness as equals.

On April 16, everyone will pay taxes. On April 17, join us in proclaiming that everyone should benefit from the government those taxes support.

If you want more information about participating in the national demonstration or if you want to organize some other activity in your area to demonstrate your opposition, please contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or 773-463-4776. An Advocacy Packet and a Media Toolkit are available upon request.

If you're tired of being left out

## **LEAVE OUT**

with the National Disabled Student Union on Tuesday, April 17, 2001

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which says that disabled people -- who have historically been left out of schools, jobs, and communities -- have the same rights as anyone else in this country. Schools, employers, and places of public accommodation, the ADA says, may no longer leave us out.

But this year the Supreme Court, in yet another decision that weakens civil rights, has decided that even though states have to comply with the ADA, state employees can't recover money damages when they've been discriminated against. This will make it harder for state employees like Patricia Garrett -- who was **fired by the University of Alabama** because she'd had breast cancer -- to fight against discrimination in the workplace. It will make it easier for state universities to discriminate against disabled faculty and staff. It will make it easier for state agencies to discriminate against disabled people looking for jobs. It will make it easier to leave us out.

On April 17, 1960, **the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded** in Raleigh, North Carolina. SNCC became a major civil rights force in the United States, but the legacy of SNCC and other civil rights groups is being eroded by a Supreme Court insistent on weakening our rights in the name of "states' rights." 41 years after the birth of SNCC, we ask you to join with us to call -- again -- for all people to be treated with justice and fairness as equals.

On April 16, 2001, your federal and state taxes are due. The following day, we ask you to remind the government that our taxes must not be used to discriminate against us.

**At 1pm Eastern (noon Central, 11am Mountain, 10am Pacific) on April 17, disabled students and our allies will "leave out"** of our schools, our jobs, and our homes, to remind the government that when business as usual means discrimination, then we want no part of it.

**We're tired of being left out, and on April 17 we're leaving out.**

If you want more information about participating in the national demonstration or if you want to organize some other activity in your area to demonstrate your opposition, please contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or 773-463-4776. An Advocacy Packet and a Media Toolkit are available upon request.

# LEAVE OUT

with the National Disabled Student Union on Tuesday, April 17, 2001

In 1990, Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act to protect the civil rights of people with disabilities. The ADA says that disabled people -- who have historically been left out of schools, jobs, and communities -- have the same rights as anyone else in this country. Schools and employers and places of public accommodation, the ADA says, may no longer leave us out.

## **Same struggle, different difference.**

But the Supreme Court has been weakening civil rights laws in the name of protecting "states' rights." Last year they went after the **Violence Against Women Act**. They went after the **Age Discrimination in Employment Act**. Now it's the **ADA**. The Supreme Court has decided that even though states have to comply with the ADA, state employees can't recover money damages when they've been discriminated against. This will make it harder for state employees like Patricia Garrett -- who was fired by the University of Alabama because she'd had breast cancer -- to fight against discrimination in the workplace. It will make it easier for state universities to discriminate against disabled faculty and staff. It will make it easier for state agencies to discriminate against disabled people looking for jobs. It will make it easier to leave us out. **And we have to wonder: who's next?**

## **We will not go back.**

The promise of equality, the dream of justice, that so many people in America have fought so long to realize, is threatened by these decisions. But **we will not abandon the promise; we will not give up the dream**. On April 17, 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was founded in Raleigh, North Carolina. SNCC became a major civil rights force in the United States, but the legacy of SNCC and other civil rights groups is being eroded by a Supreme Court insistent on weakening our rights in the name of "states' rights." 41 years after the birth of SNCC, **students once again ask you to join with us to call for all people to be treated with justice and fairness as equals**.

On April 16, 2001, we will all pay federal and state taxes. The following day, we ask you to remind the government that our taxes must not be used to discriminate against us. **At 1pm Eastern (noon Central, 11am Mountain, 10am Pacific) on April 17, disabled students and others who call for equal justice will "leave out" of our schools, our jobs, and our homes, to remind the government that when business as usual means discrimination, we want no part of it.**

If you want more information about participating in the national demonstration, if you want to organize some other activity in your area to demonstrate your opposition, or if you want to join with NDSU in calling for justice, please contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or 773-463-4776. An Advocacy Packet and a Media Toolkit are available upon request.



**INVITATION TO JOIN  
THE NATIONAL DISABLED STUDENTS UNION (NDSU) LISTSERV**

The National Disabled Students Union (NDSU) listserv is an e-mail discussion list for students with disabilities of all ages throughout the United States. The overall purpose of this cross-disability listserv is to mobilize and organize students with disabilities throughout the nation in order to continue the legacy of empowerment and community solidarity that began with our predecessors in the 1970s (which is now being threatened by the Supreme Court).

**TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE NDSU LIST:**

**Address your email to:**

**[listserv@listserv.uic.edu](mailto:listserv@listserv.uic.edu)**

**In the body of the message type:**

**SUBSCRIBE NDSU Jane Doe**

**Replace "Jane Doe" with your first and last name.**

If you have any questions or concerns about the NDSU list, please feel free to contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or at 773-463-4776.



## **PLEASE COME PLAN WITH US**

**To get in touch with other NDSU organizers and allies** working on the April 17 protest, contact Sarah Triano at [strian1@uic.edu](mailto:strian1@uic.edu) or 773-463-4776.

**Whatever you do locally, we want to hear about it.** We'd love to know what you're planning and to see whether we can help. We can offer you some help in organizing and in trying to get local media to cover your event. If we know of anyone else working on the Leave-Out in your community, we can help you connect. And we'd love to hear, afterward, how it went, and see any media coverage that you might have gotten.

**We'd like to invite you to join our listserv.** The National Disabled Students Union (NDSU) listserv is an e-mail discussion list for students with disabilities of all ages throughout the United States. The overall purpose of this cross-disability listserv is to mobilize and organize students with disabilities throughout the nation in order to continue the legacy of empowerment and community solidarity that began with our predecessors in the 1970s (which is now being threatened by the Supreme Court).

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