



DATE: July 20, 2020

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Blayne Amson, ADA/Title VI Administrator, 452-6168
City Manager's Office

SUBJECT: American's with Disabilities Act Celebrates 30 years

Upon signing the Americans with Disabilities Act on July 26, 1990, President George H.W. Bush declared, "With today's signing of the landmark Americans for Disabilities Act, every man, woman, and child with a disability can now pass through once-closed doors into a bright new era of equality, independence, and freedom." As we approach the 30-year anniversary of the signing of this historic and one-of-a-kind civil rights law, these words hold a special significance and a continued challenge.

This law brought forth new freedoms for people with disabilities in many areas of life through its protective provisions. Employment numbers for people with disabilities are now stronger. Educational attainment among this population is higher. Transportation infrastructures have standardized and improved, allowing better access throughout our communities. Perhaps most noticeably, facilities and pedestrian access has been positively altered across the nation, allowing freedom of movement seldomly seen so consistently in other nations throughout the world.

Despite all these advancements and reasons to celebrate this anniversary, the words of President Bush also call us to continued action. We must strengthen the City's engagement with the disability community. We must continue the work of creating opportunities for people with disabilities which include encouragement to bring their whole selves to the table. We recognize that in addition to having a disability, these members of our community are complex and multifaceted people who deserve to be celebrated, uplifted, and prioritized, not just through the lens of compliance, but through the lens of equity, justice, and opportunity. People with disabilities who are also people of color are negatively impacted by racism, racial intolerance, and ableism, and we must take concrete steps to address these issues. To fully achieve the freedom President Bush referenced, we must ensure the City of Bellevue is seen as a trusted community partner.

In the spirit of transparency and commitment to these imperatives, the City launched a webpage this month highlighting the work happening in each City department specifically to serve people with disabilities. Perhaps more importantly, we hope this work creates opportunities to get involved and foster authentic communication between the disability community and the local government that serves them. The ultimate hope is to open the door further and to uplift and celebrate people with disabilities as part of the diversity that makes Bellevue such a wonderful place to be.

This proclamation brought to Council tonight is written not only to celebrate this historic occasion, but to reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities, as their whole selves, are able to advance and prosper in Bellevue.