

PRESS RELEASE

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**St. John's Community Services Advocates for Passage of the
ADA Amendments Act of 2008**

Washington, DC—The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), one of the most significant civil rights acts of our modern era, has been weakened by U.S. Supreme Court decisions narrowing the definition of disability and reducing the protections for people with disabilities. In celebration of ADA's 18th anniversary on July 26, nothing could be more fitting than the timely passage of the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (H.R. 3195), overwhelmingly passed by The U.S. House of Representatives on June 25, 2008.

St. John's Community Services joins over 180 national disability organizations and many key business associations to strongly encourage the passage of the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 by the U.S. Senate and signing into law by President Bush. The Act clarifies the definition of disability, including what it means to be "substantially limited in a major life activity," and prohibits the determination of whether an individual has a disability based on the use of supportive measures such as medication, prosthetics, and assistive technology. Thus, the ADA will once again cover the people Congress intended to be covered.

Under the aegis of the ADA, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA), St. John's Community Services (SJCS) adheres to the fundamental belief that people with disabilities must be given the opportunity to choose the communities they live in and the activities they participate in. SJCS believes that competitive work is the best route to personal empowerment and a good quality of life. Thus, we support individuals with disabilities to prepare for and select jobs that suit their skills, expectations, and long-term goals. This belief put into action is consistent with the intentions of the ADA for equal opportunities, making the passage of H.R. 3195 even more imperative. We can ill-afford the gains of the past to be diluted nor the full rights for people with disabilities still to be attained further inhibited.

St. John's Community Services, now celebrating its 140th anniversary year, is a non-profit, non-denominational agency that is dedicated to *advancing community support and opportunities for people living with disabilities*. SJCS provides community living, supported employment, community participation and educational services to over 450 adults and children in the District of Columbia, Tennessee, Virginia, and Pennsylvania.

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