

ASAN Statement on *Cummings v. Premier Rehab Keller, P.L.L.C.*

On April 28, the Supreme Court handed down an opinion in a case called *Cummings v. Premier Rehab Keller, P.L.L.C.*, a Rehabilitation Act case. The Rehabilitation Act protects people with disabilities from discrimination by the federal government and agencies that use federal funds. In *Cummings v. Premier Rehab Keller, P.L.L.C.*, Jane Cummings, a Deafblind woman, sued a physical therapy provider for refusing to provide her with an ASL interpreter during treatment. In her lawsuit, Cummings asked for money damages because of the emotional distress this caused her. She said that the physical therapy provider had violated the Rehabilitation Act when it refused to provide her with an interpreter.

In its decision in the *Cummings* case, the Court ruled that people who sue under the Rehabilitation Act cannot get money damages for the emotional harm caused by discrimination. This is a problem because the short-term harm from discrimination is often emotional, though the effects of discrimination can also be physical or financial. For this reason, many suits under the Rehabilitation Act have been based on emotional harms.

ASAN opposes the Supreme Court's ruling in *Cummings*, which will make it more difficult for disabled people to sue for our rights under the Rehabilitation Act. Along with our coalition partners, we are strategizing on what Rehabilitation Act litigation looks like after this change.

*The Autistic Self Advocacy Network seeks to advance the principles of the disability rights movement with regard to autism. ASAN believes that the goal of autism advocacy should be a world in which autistic people enjoy equal access, rights, and opportunities. We work to empower autistic people across the world to take control of our own lives and the future of our common community, and seek to organize the autistic community to ensure our voices are heard in the national conversation about us. Nothing About Us, Without Us!*