

No. 02-10360-JJ

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS
FOR THE ELEVENTH CIRCUIT

ASSOCIATION FOR DISABLED AMERICANS, et al.,

Plaintiffs - Appellants

v.

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY,

Defendant - Appellee

ON APPEAL FROM THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

**CORRECTED SUPPLEMENTAL BRIEF FOR THE
UNITED STATES AS INTERVENOR**

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Association for Disabled Americans v. FIU
No. 02-10360

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STATEMENT REGARDING ORAL ARGUMENT

Because this appeal will require this Court to adjudicate the constitutional validity of an Act of Congress, the United States believes oral argument would be appropriate and helpful.

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STATEMENT OF JURISDICTION

The United States concurs with plaintiff's statement of jurisdiction.

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Whether the statutory provision removing Eleventh Amendment immunity for suits under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12131 *et seq.*, is a valid exercise of Congress's authority under Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment, as applied to the class of cases implicating access to educational services.

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

This appeal involves a suit filed under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The defendant asserted Eleventh Amendment immunity to the plaintiffs' claims under the ADA, and the district court dismissed the claims on that ground. The plaintiff appealed and the United States intervened on appeal pursuant to 28 U.S.C. 2403(a) to defend the constitutionality of the abrogation of Eleventh Amendment immunity in Title II of the ADA. Pursuant to this Court's order of June 7, 2004, the United States offers this brief addressing the applicability of the Supreme Court's decision in *Tennessee v. Lane*, 124 S. Ct. 1978 (2004), to the issues in this case.

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Viewed in light of the teachings and example of *Tennessee v. Lane*, 124 S. Ct. 1978 (2004), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act is valid Fourteenth Amendment legislation as applied to cases implicating access to educational services. In *Lane*, the Court found that "Congress enacted Title II against a backdrop of pervasive unequal treatment in the administration of state services and programs,

including systematic deprivations of fundamental rights.” *Id.* at 1989. That history of unconstitutional discrimination, the Court held, authorized Congress to enact prophylactic legislation to address “public services,” generally, including educational services. See *id.* at 1992. Indeed, the evidence of unconstitutional discrimination in education was overwhelming, including outright exclusion of disabled children from schools (over 1 million in 1975) and a broad range of discriminatory treatment within schools, evincing reliance on irrational stereotypes and even outright hostility toward people with disabilities.

Title II, as it applies to education, is a congruent and proportionate response to that record. Title II is carefully tailored to respect the State’s legitimate interests while protecting against the risk of unconstitutional discrimination in education and remedying the lingering legacy of discrimination against people with disabilities in education. Thus, Title II often applies in public education to prohibit directly discrimination based on hidden invidious animus that would be difficult to detect or prove directly. The statute also establishes reasonable uniform standards for treating requests for accommodations in public schools where unfettered discretionary decision-making has, in the past, led to irrational and invidious decisions. In requiring reasonable steps toward making school facilities physically accessible, Title II responds to the lingering effects of a long history of exclusion of people with disabilities from schools. Moreover, in integrating students with disabilities among their peers, Title II acts to relieve the ignorance and stereotypes it found at the base of discrimination in education.

These limited prophylactic and remedial measures, judged against the backdrop

of pervasive unconstitutional discrimination that Congress found exists both in public education and in other areas of governmental services, represent a good faith effort to make meaningful the guarantees of the Fourteenth Amendment, not an illicit attempt to rewrite them. Accordingly, Congress validly abrogated the State's sovereign immunity to plaintiff's claims regarding access to public education in this case.

ARGUMENT

UNDER THE ANALYSIS OF *TENNESSEE V. LANE*, TITLE II IS VALID FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT LEGISLATION AS APPLIED IN THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

Although the Eleventh Amendment ordinarily renders the States immune from suits in federal court by private citizens, Congress may abrogate the States' immunity if it "unequivocally expressed its intent to abrogate that immunity," *Kimel v. Florida Bd. of Regents*, 528 U.S. 62, 73 (2000), and acts "pursuant to a valid exercise of its power under § 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment to enforce the substantive guarantees of that Amendment," *Tennessee v. Lane*, 124 S. Ct. 1978, 1985 (2004).

In its prior brief, the State argued that the substantive requirements of Title II were beyond Congress's Fourteenth Amendment authority. The Supreme Court addressed that contention in *Tennessee v. Lane*, holding that "Title II, as it applies to the class of cases implicating the fundamental right of access to the courts, constitutes a valid exercise of Congress' § 5 authority to enforce the guarantees of the Fourteenth Amendment." *Id.* at 1994. To reach this conclusion, the Court applied the three-part analysis for Fourteenth Amendment legislation created by *City of Boerne v. Flores*, 521 U.S. 507 (1997). The Court considered (1) the "constitutional right or rights that

Congress sought to enforce when it enacted Title II,” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1988; (2) whether there was a history of unconstitutional disability discrimination to support Congress’s determination that “inadequate provision of public services and access to public facilities was an appropriate subject for prophylactic legislation,” *id.* at 1992; and (3) “whether Title II is an appropriate response to this history and pattern of unequal treatment,” as applied to the class of cases implicating access to judicial services. *Ibid.*

With respect to the first question, the Court found that Title II enforces rights under the Equal Protection Clause as well as an array of rights subject to heightened constitutional scrutiny under the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. With respect to the second question, the Court conclusively found a sufficient historical predicate of unconstitutional disability discrimination in the provision of public services to justify enactment of a prophylactic remedy pursuant to Congress’s authority under Section 5 of the Fourteenth Amendment. And finally, with respect to the third question, the Court found that the congruence and proportionality of the remedies in Title II should be judged on a category-by-category basis in light of the particular constitutional rights at stake in the relevant category of public services.¹

¹ The Court in *Lane* did not examine the congruence and proportionality of Title II as a whole because the Court found that the statute was valid Section 5 legislation as applied to the class of cases before it. Because Title II is valid Section 5 legislation as applied to the class of cases implicating students’ rights, this Court need not consider the validity of Title II as a whole. The United States continues to maintain, however, that Title II as a whole is valid Section 5 legislation because it is congruent and proportional to Congress’s goal of

Applying the holding of *Lane*, this Court should conclude that Title II is valid Fourteenth Amendment Legislation as it applies in the context of public education.

I. Constitutional Rights At Stake

As discussed in Part B, when Congress enacted the ADA, it had before it evidence of a widespread pattern of exclusion of children with disabilities from public schools and discrimination within schools, much of which reflected irrational stereotypes and hostility toward people with disabilities. Such treatment is subject to rational basis review under the Equal Protection Clause, which prohibits arbitrary treatment based on irrational stereotypes or hostility.

Although classifications relating to education only involve rational basis review under the Equal Protection Clause, public education is not “merely some governmental ‘benefit’ indistinguishable from other forms of social welfare legislation.” *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 221 (1982). “Both the importance of education in maintaining our basic institutions, and the lasting impact of its deprivation on the life of the child, mark the distinction.” *Ibid*. Indeed, the Court has long recognized that “education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments” because “it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.” *Brown v. Board of Educ.*, 347 U.S. 483, 493 (1954). Beyond the importance of education to the individual, the Court recognized “early in our history, that some degree of education is necessary to prepare citizens to participate effectively and intelligently in our open

eliminating discrimination on the basis of disability in the provision of public services – an area that the Supreme Court in *Lane* determined is an “appropriate subject for prophylactic legislation” under Section 5. *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1992.

political system if we are to preserve freedom and independence.” *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205, 221 (1972).

In the modern age, the importance of access to education extends to the university as well. In considering access to a college education, the Court recently reaffirmed “the overriding importance of preparing students for work and citizenship” and described “education as pivotal to sustaining our political and cultural heritage with a fundamental role in maintaining the fabric of society.” *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 331 (2003) (internal quotation marks omitted). “This Court has long recognized that education is the very foundation of good citizenship.” *Ibid.* (quoting *Brown*, 347 U.S. at 493) (internal punctuation omitted). For this reason, the Court explained, “[e]nsuring that public [educational] institutions are open and available to all segments of American society * * * represents a paramount government objective.” *Id.* at 331-332.

Of course, a State “may legitimately attempt to limit its expenditures” for public education. *Shapiro v. Thompson*, 394 U.S. 618, 633 (1969). “But a State may not accomplish such a purpose by invidious distinctions between classes of its citizens.” *Ibid.* Such invidious distinctions include discrimination against the disabled based on “[m]ere negative attitudes, or fear” alone, *Board of Trs. of Univ. of Ala. v. Garrett*, 531 U.S. 356, 367 (2001), for even rational basis scrutiny is not satisfied by irrational fears or stereotypes, see *ibid.*, and simple “animosity” towards the disabled is not a legitimate state purpose, see *Romer v. Evans*, 517 U.S. 620, 634 (1996). By the same token, a State may not treat individuals with disabilities in a way that simply gives effect to private invidious discrimination. See *Palmore v. Sidoti*,

466 U.S. 429, 433 (1984).

And while it is generally true that States are not required by the Equal Protection Clause “to make special accommodations for the disabled,” this is true only “so long as their actions toward such individuals are rational.” *Garrett*, 531 U.S. at 367. Moreover, a purported rational basis for treatment of the disabled will fail if the State does not accord the same treatment to other groups similarly situated. See *id.* at 366 n.4; *City of Cleburne v. Cleburne Living Ctr.*, 473 U.S. 432, 447-450 (1985).²

II. *Historical Predicate Of Unconstitutional Disability Discrimination In Public Services*

In *Lane*, the Court reviewed the evidence and concluded that “Congress enacted Title II against a backdrop of pervasive unequal treatment in the administration of state services and programs, including systematic deprivations of fundamental rights.” 124 S. Ct. at 1989. The Court remarked on the “sheer volume

² Discrimination in education can also implicate the Due Process Clause. “[T]he State is constrained to recognize a student’s legitimate entitlement to a public education as a property interest which is protected by the Due Process Clause.” *Goss v. Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565, 574 (1975). Accordingly, suspension and expulsion decisions must be made in accordance with the basic due process requirement of notice and an opportunity to be heard. *Id.* at 579. As made clear in *Lane*, public entities may be required to take steps to ensure that people with disabilities are afforded the same meaningful opportunity to be heard as others. See 124 S. Ct. at 1994. In addition, students have a substantive right under the Due Process Clause to be free from government conduct that is “arbitrary in the constitutional sense.” *County of Sacramento v. Lewis*, 523 U.S. 833, 846 (1998). See, e.g., *Jefferson v. Ysleta Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 817 F.2d 303 (5th Cir. 1987) (due process violated when student tied to a chair and not allowed to use the bathroom for most of school day).

of evidence demonstrating the nature and extent of unconstitutional discrimination against persons with disabilities in the provision of public services,” *id.* at 1992, and concluded that it is “clear beyond peradventure that inadequate provision of public services and access to public facilities was an appropriate subject for prophylactic legislation,” *ibid.*

Although *Lane* ultimately upheld Title II as valid Fourteenth Amendment legislation only as applied to access to courts, its conclusions regarding the historical predicate for Title II are not limited to that context. The Court did not begin its “as-applied” analysis until it reached the third step of the *Boerne* analysis addressing the Act’s congruence and proportionality. See 124 S. Ct. at 1992-1993. At the second step, the Court considered the record supporting Title II in all its applications and found not only “a pattern of unconstitutional treatment in the administration of justice,” *id.* at 1990, but also violations of constitutional rights in the context of voting, marriage, jury service, zoning, the penal system, public education, law enforcement, and the treatment of institutionalized persons, *id.* at 1989.³ That record,

³ In describing the adequacy of the historical predicate, the Court also spoke in general terms, remarking, for instance, on “the sheer volume of evidence demonstrating the nature and extent of unconstitutional discrimination against persons with disabilities in the provision of *public services*.” *Id.* at 1991 (emphasis added). In concluding that the “the record of constitutional violations in this case * * * far exceeds the record in *Hibbs*,” *id.* at 1992, the Court specifically referred to the record of “exclusion of persons with disabilities from the enjoyment of *public services*,” *ibid.* (emphasis added), rather than to the record of exclusion from judicial services in particular. See also *ibid.* (relying on congressional finding in 42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(3) and italicizing phrase “access to public services” rather than specific examples of public services listed in the

the Court concluded, supported prophylactic legislation to address discrimination in “public services,” *id.* at 1992, including discrimination in “education,” *ibid.* See also *id.* at 1989 (finding a “pattern of unequal treatment in the administration of a wide range of public services * * * including * * * public education”). Thus, the adequacy of Title II’s historical predicate to support prophylactic legislation is no longer open to dispute. But even if it were, there is ample evidence of a history of unconstitutional discrimination against individual with disabilities in public education.

A. History Of Disability Discrimination In Public Education

Children with mental disabilities were labeled “ineducable” and categorically excluded from public schools to “protect nonretarded children from them.” *City of Cleburne*, 473 U.S. at 463 (Marshall, J., concurring in the judgment in part); see also *Board of Educ. v. Rowley*, 458 U.S. 176, 191 (1982) (“many of these children were excluded completely from any form of public education”). Even in the relatively recent past, many States permitted school administrators to exclude from school children who, in their opinion, “would not benefit” from education.⁴ In 1965, North Carolina criminalized any subsequent attempt by parents to send their excluded child to school. See Act of May 18, 1965, ch. 584, 1965 N.C. Sess. Law. 643. Some States also required school officials and parents to report disabled children for

finding).

⁴ See Philip T.K. Daniel, *Educating Students with Disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment: A Slippery Slope for Educators*, 35 J. of Educ. and Admin. 397, 398 (1997).

institutionalization⁵ or enrollment in special segregated schools.⁶

When Congress studied disability discrimination in education in the mid-1970s, it found continuing wholesale exclusion of disabled students from the public schools. Congress's findings, which led to passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act of 1975 (EHA), 84 Stat. 175, were later described by the Supreme Court:

When the [EHA] was passed in 1975, Congress had before it ample evidence that such legislative assurances were sorely needed: 21 years after this Court declared education to be “perhaps the most important function of state and local governments,” congressional studies revealed that better than half of the Nation’s 8 million disabled children was not receiving appropriate educational services. Indeed, one out of every eight of these children were excluded from the public school altogether; many others were simply “warehoused” in special classes or were neglectfully shepherded through the system until they were old enough to drop out.

Honig v. Doe, 484 U.S. 305, 309 (1988) (citations omitted). Thus, the legislative findings of the EHA described that as late as 1975, and despite prior federal efforts, “1,000,000 of the children with disabilities in the United States were excluded entirely from the public school system.” 20 U.S.C. 1400(c)(2)(C).

⁵ See *e.g.*, Act of Mar. 3, 1921, ch. 235, 1921 S.D. Sess. Laws 344; Act of Feb. 21, 1917, ch. 354, §5, 1917 Or. Laws 740; Act of June 21, 1906, ch. 508, §12, 1906 Mass. Acts & Resolves 707.

⁶ See, *e.g.*, Ala. Code §21-1-10 (1975); Iowa Code Ann. § 299.18 (1983); Ohio Rev. Code Ann. §3325.02 (2002); Okla. Stat. Ann. tit. 70, § 1744 (West 1990); see also Tex. Code Ann. § 3260 (West 1990) (establishing “State Hospital for Crippled and Deformed Children”); Mont. Code Ann. §§38-801, 38-802 (1961) (establishing a school “for the education, training and detention of subnormal minors and adults and epileptics” who “from social standards, are a menace to society”).

A decade later, during investigations which led to the passage of the ADA, Congress found that “discrimination against individuals with disabilities persists in such critical areas as * * * education,” 42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(3), and that, as a result, “people with disabilities, as a group, occupy an inferior status in our society, and are severely disadvantaged socially, vocationally, economically, and educationally,” 42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(6).

Those statutory findings were amply supported by evidence not only of widespread exclusion of disabled students from education altogether, but also repeated examples of irrational and invidious discrimination against those students allowed to attend school.

1. *Record Of Exclusion From Education*

Congress was presented with substantial evidence that even years after the passage of the EHA, tens of thousands of disabled children were still being excluded from the public schools. See U.S. Civil Rights Comm’n, *Accommodating the Spectrum of Individual Abilities* 28 n.77 (1983) (*Spectrum*). Extensive surveys further revealed a dramatic educational gap between individuals with disabilities and the community at large. Forty percent of persons with disabilities did not finish high school (triple the rate for the general population), and only 29% had any college education (compared with 48% for the population at large). National Council on the of Handicapped, *On the Threshold of Independence* 14 (1988) (*Threshold*).⁷ This lack

⁷ See also *Hearing on the Commission on Education of the Deaf and Special Education Programs: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Select Education of the House Comm. on Education and Labor*, 100th Cong., 2d Sess. 3 (1988) (statement

of educational attainment contributed to an “alarming rate of poverty”⁸ and a “Great Divide” in employment⁹ for persons with disabilities. *Ibid.* Congress was also given first-hand accounts illustrating these statistics, through testimony that often made clear the invidious basis of the exclusionary practices. For example, one witness testified that “[w]hen I was 5, my mother proudly pushed my wheelchair to our local public school, where I was promptly refused admission because the principal ruled that I was a fire hazard.” S. Rep. No. 116, 101st Cong., 1st Sess. 7 (1989). Another person recounted that a state university declined to admit him to a graduate program, explaining that “we have had disabled persons in this department before; it never worked out well.” WI 1757.¹⁰ Indeed, the record is replete with examples of discriminatory exclusion of disabled students from schools under circumstances that

of Rep. Bartlett) (“Seventy percent of hearing impaired high school graduates cannot attend a post-secondary educational institution because their reading levels are still at a second or third grade level.”).

⁸ Twenty percent of persons with disabilities had family incomes below the poverty line (more than twice the percentage of the general population), and 15% of disabled persons had incomes of \$15,000 or less. *Threshold* 13-14.

⁹ Two-thirds of all working-age persons with disabilities were unemployed; only one in four worked full-time. *Threshold* 14.

¹⁰ In *Lane*, the Court relied on the handwritten letters and commentaries collected during the Task Force’s forums, which were part of the official legislative history of the ADA, lodged with the Court in *Garrett*, 531 U.S. 356, and catalogued in Appendix C to Justice Breyer’s dissent in that case. See *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1990. That Appendix cites to the documents by State and Bates stamp number, 531 U.S. at 389-424, a practice we follow in this brief. The United States can provide this Court copies of the documents cited in this brief, or the entire four-volume set, upon request.

Congress could reasonably conclude often demonstrate invidious animus.¹¹

This pattern of exclusion is also documented in numerous state and federal cases. For example, in *Lane*, the Supreme Court specifically noted two cases in which students with AIDS were excluded from the public schools. See 124 S. Ct. at 1989 n.12. In one, a seven-year old student with AIDS was confined to a modular classroom where he was the only student. See *Robertson v. Granite City Cmty. Unit Sch. Dist. No. 9*, 684 F. Supp. 1002 (S.D. Ill. 1988). In another, a kindergarten student with AIDS was excluded from class and forced to take home tutoring. See

¹¹ See UT 1556 (child denied admission to public school because first grade teacher refused to teach him); AL 08 (child with cerebral palsy denied admission to school); UT 1587 (third grade teacher refused to give student with disability any grades, writing on the report card “[t]his child does not belong in public schools, he is a waste of tax payers money”); MS 999 (state university instructor refused to teach blind person); MI 920 (student denied admission to medical school because of speech impediment); NC 1144 (mentally handicapped student with no behavior problems denied admission to after-school program because “their policy was not to keep handicapped” kids); see also PA 1432 (a child who uses wheelchair, unable to enroll in first grade because the class was held in inaccessible classroom; school system proposed, instead, to enroll him in self-contained special education classes held in accessible room, even though the child had no mental impairment); *Education for All Handicapped Children, 1973-1974: Hearings Before the Subcomm. on the Handicapped of the Senate Comm. on Labor and Public Welfare*, 93d Cong., 1st Sess. 384 (1973) (EHA Senate Hearings) (Peter Hickey) (student in Vermont was forced to attend classes with students two years behind him because he could not climb staircase to attend classes with his peers); *Commission on the Education of the Deaf’s Report to Congress: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on the Handicapped of the Senate Comm. on Labor and Human Resources*, 100th Cong., 2d Sess. 15 (1988) (testimony of Gertrude S. Galloway, Chairperson, Precollege Programs Committee) (“[W]e found that many deaf children are receiving inappropriate education or no education at all, that very same problem that promoted passage of the EHA in the first place.”)

Thomas v. Atascadero Unified Sch. Dist., 662 F. Supp. 376 (C.D. Cal. 1986).

Congress was specifically aware of cases like these. See, e.g., 136 Cong. Rec. 2471, 2480 (May 17, 1990) (Rep. Barnett) (discussing case of Ryan White, who had AIDS and was excluded from school not because the school board “thought Ryan would infect the others” but because “some parents were afraid he would”). There are many other similar cases as well.¹² Moreover, the examples in the case law of discriminatory exclusion are not limited to cases involving children with HIV or AIDS.¹³

¹² See *Martinez v. School Bd.*, 861 F.2d 1502 (11th Cir. 1988) (child with HIV excluded from school); *Chalk v. United States Dist. Ct. Cent. Dist.*, 840 F.2d 701 (9th Cir. 1988) (certified teacher barred from teaching after diagnosis of AIDS); *Doe v. Dolton Elem. Sch. Dist. No. 148*, 694 F. Supp. 440 (N.D. Ill. 1988) (elementary student with AIDS excluded from attending regular classes or extracurricular activities); *District 27 Cmty. Sch. Bd. v. Board of Educ.*, 502 N.Y.S.2d 325 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1986) (two school boards sought to prevent attendance of any student with AIDS in any school in the city, unless all of the students at that school had AIDS); *Board of Educ. v. Cooperman*, 507 A.2d 253, 277 (N.J. Super. Ct. App. Div. 1986) (children with AIDS were excluded from regular classroom attendance), aff’d as modified by 523 A.2d 655 (N.J. 1987); *Ray v. School Dist.*, 666 F. Supp. 1524, 1528 (M.D. Fla. 1987) (children with HIV excluded from school, despite health officials’ certification that children could safely attend school); *Doe v. Belleville Pub. Sch. Dist. No. 118*, 672 F. Supp. 342 (S.D. Ill. 1987) (child with HIV excluded from school).

¹³ See, e.g., *New York State Ass’n for Retarded Children, Inc. v. Carey*, 466 F. Supp. 487 (E.D.N.Y. 1979) (mentally retarded students excluded from public school system); *Hairston v. Drosick*, 423 F. Supp. 180 (S.D. W. Va. 1976) (school refused to admit child with spina bifida without the daily presence of her mother, even though student was of normal mental competence and capable of performing easily in a classroom situation); *Mills v. Board of Educ.*, 348 F. Supp. 866 (D.D.C. 1972) (mentally retarded students excluded from public school system); *Pennsylvania Ass’n for Retarded Children v. Pennsylvania*, 334 F. Supp. 1257

2. *Record Of Discriminatory Treatment Within Schools*

Even when students with disabilities were permitted to attend school, students faced treatment that Congress could reasonably conclude represented discrimination based on invidious stereotypes or hostility toward people with disabilities. For example, Congress heard of a student with spina bifida who was barred from the school library for two years “because her braces and crutches made too much noise.” EHA Senate Hearings at 400 (Mrs. Richard Walbridge). Another student testified that at her “graduation from high school, the principal attempted to prevent me from accepting an award in a ceremony on stage simply because I was in a wheelchair.” S. Rep. No. 116, *supra*, at 7. Many other examples show actions based on the continued assumption that children with disabilities were unworthy of, or unable to benefit from, an education. Thus, one witness told Congress that “I was considered too crippled to compete by both the school and my parents. In fact, the [segregated] school never even took the time to teach me to write! * * * The effects of the school’s failure to teach me are still evident today.” 2 *Staff of the House Comm. on Education*

(E.D. Pa. 1971) (mentally retarded students excluded from public school system); *Harrison v. Michigan*, 350 F. Supp. 846, 847 (E.D. Mich. 1972) (“Until very recently the State of Michigan was making little effort to educate children who are suffering from a variety of mental, behavioral, physical and emotional handicaps. Many children were denied education.”); see also Frederick J. Weintraub & Alan R. Abeson, *Appropriate Education for All Handicapped Children: A Growing Issue*, 23 Syracuse L. Rev. 1037, 1042 (1972) (autistic child excluded from public schools); *ibid.* (disabled student with low IQ but able to read and do basic math excluded from school as “unable to profit from school attendance”); *id.* at 1043 (child with petit mal epilepsy, controlled through medication, refused admission to public school).

and Labor, 101st Cong., 2d Sess., *Legislative History of Public Law 101-336: The Americans with Disabilities Act* 989 (Comm. Print 1990) (*Leg. Hist.*) (Mary Ella Linden). In another case, a witness with a hearing impairment described how her teacher had pointed her out in class as example of the difference between children with disabilities and others. NM 1090. When other children were told to put on their “thinking-caps,” the witness recalled, “they would demonstrate – putting a cap on their head. I was never allowed to put on a thinking-cap because I was the handicap kid.” *Ibid.* The record also contains numerous examples of children with physical impairments being placed in special education classes with mentally-impaired students for no apparent reason other than the assumption that any disability precludes receiving an education in a normal environment.¹⁴

Similar incidents illustrating irrational stereotypes and intolerance occurred at the university level. One witness recalled that, “when I was first injured, my college refused to readmit me” because “it would be ‘disgusting’ to my roommates to have

¹⁴ See, e.g., Office of the Att’y Gen., Cal. Dep’t of Justice, *Attorney General’s Commission on Disability: Final Report* 17, 81 (1989) (“A bright child with cerebral palsy is assigned to a class with mentally retarded and other developmentally disabled children solely because of her physical disability”; in one town, all children with disabilities are grouped into a single classroom regardless of individual ability); VT 1635-1636 (quadriplegic woman with cerebral palsy and a high intellect, who scored well in school, was branded “retarded” by educators, denied placement in a regular school setting, and placed with emotionally disturbed children, where she was told she was “not college material”); NE 1031 (school districts labeled as mentally retarded a blind child); AK 38 (school district labeled child with cerebral palsy, who subsequently obtained a Masters Degree, as mentally retarded).

to live with a woman with a disability.” WA 1733.¹⁵ A student with epilepsy was asked to leave a state college because her seizures were “disrupt[ive]” and, officials said, created a risk of liability. *Leg. Hist.* 1162 (Barbara Waters). A doctor with multiple sclerosis was denied admission to a psychiatric residency program because the state admissions committee “feared the negative reactions of patients to his disability.” *Id.* at 1617 (Arlene Mayerson). Similarly, a student with facial paralysis was denied a teaching assignment based solely on her appearance. OR 1384. A state university forced a blind student to drop music class because “you can’t see.” *Leg. Hist.* 1224 (Denise Karuth). Conversely, in another case, a blind student was discouraged from pursuing a degree in her chosen field of personnel management and urged to pursue a degree in music instead. See MO 1010. Congress also heard that a state commission refused to sponsor a blind student for a masters degree in rehabilitation counseling because “the State would not hire blind rehabilitation counselors, ‘[s]ince,’ and this is a quote: ‘they could not drive to see their clients.’” *Leg. Hist.* 1225. A different state university denied a blind student a chance to student teach, as required to obtain a teaching certificate, because the dean of the school was “convinced that blind people could not teach in public schools.” SD 1476. See also J. Shapiro, *No Pity* 45 (1993) (Dean of the University of California at Berkeley told a prospective student that “[w]e’ve tried cripples before and it didn’t work”); MO 1010 (college instructor told blind student she did not think she could

¹⁵ Compare *State v. Board of Educ.*, 172 N.W. 153, 153 (Wis. 1919) (excluding a boy with cerebral palsy from public school because he “produces a depressing and nauseating effect upon the teachers and school children”).

teach the student).

3. *Record Of Educational Segregation*

Congress was told that “some school systems have unnecessarily isolated and segregated handicapped children, often in separate schools and facilities.” *Spectrum* at 29. While it is possible that some such instances of segregation were entirely rational, Congress was justified in concluding that segregation of disabled students often arises from invidious animus. In a recent report to Congress, the National Council on Disability explained that it has found that

[t]he asserted reasons for segregating children with disabilities in educational settings – that a wheelchair is a fire hazard, that a child’s IQ renders her uneducable, and the like – do not reveal the true basis for excluding them. The true basis is the expectation that the children will become dependent adults, unable to contribute to society. This view makes their childhood education seem futile – they will be dependent no matter how good their education. Compounded by widespread discrimination, inaccessible buildings, inaccessible transportation, and lack of adequate support services, these stereotypes were the reason for severely restricted options available to children and adults with disabilities and promoted segregated and inferior education.

National Council on Disability, *Back to School on Civil Rights: Advancing the Federal Commitment to Leave No Child Behind* 27 (2000).

These observations were borne out in cases documenting segregation of disabled children from their classmates for no apparent rational reason.¹⁶ Congress

¹⁶ See, e.g., *Hairston*, 423 F. Supp. at 182 (child with spinobifida, who was “of normal mental competence” and “clearly physically able to attend school in a regular public classroom” excluded from local public school because she “was not wanted in the regular classroom”); *Roncker v. Walter*, 700 F.2d 1058 (6th Cir.) (mentally retarded children excluded from all contact with nondisabled children), cert. denied, 464 U.S. 864 (1983); *Daniel R.R. v. State Bd. of Educ.*, 874 F.2d 1036, 1050 (5th Cir. 1989) (same); *Greer v. Rome City Sch. Dist.*, 950 F.2d 688

was also told that “a great many handicapped children” are denied “recreational, athletic, and extracurricular activities provided for non-handicapped students.”

Spectrum 29.¹⁷

4. *Record Of Physical Mistreatment*

The record further documents instances of physical mistreatment of students with disabilities. For example, Congress heard the story of a first grade student who “was spanked every day” because her deafness prevented her from following spoken instructions. EHA Senate Hearings 793 (Christine Griffith). The Task Force was given a newspaper article describing how three elementary schools locked mentally disabled children in a box for punishment. See NY 1123.

B. *Gravity Of Harm Of Disability Discrimination In Public Education*

The appropriateness of Section 5 legislation, however, is not purely a product of the history of discrimination. It is also a function of the “gravity of the harm [the

(11th Cir. 1991) (same); *Wilson v. Marana Unified Sch. Dist. No. 6*, 735 F.2d 1178 (9th Cir. 1984) (student with cerebral palsy sent to segregated school); *Johnston v. Ann Arbor Pub. Schs.*, 569 F. Supp. 1502, 1505-1506 (E.D. Mich. 1983) (student with cerebral palsy sent to segregated school).

¹⁷ See also TX 1480-1481 (student in wheelchair excluded from all activities in physical education class, even activities, like throwing a frisbee, she could easily perform); MO 1014 (high school students with mental disabilities not allowed to attend gym class with other students); OR 1375 (child with cerebral palsy was “given cleaning jobs while other[] [non-disabled students] played sports”); VA 1642 (high school student with learning disability labeled “retarded” and forbidden from attending regular community school or taking a drama class, although student already performed in community youth theater); *Baird ex rel. Baird v. Rose*, 192 F.3d 462 (4th Cir. 1999) (seventh-grader suffering from clinical depression prohibited from singing in school choir).

law] seeks to prevent.” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1988. Even when discrimination in education does not abridge a fundamental right, the gravity of the harm is enormous. See, e.g., *Brown v. Board of Educ.*, 347 U.S. 483, 493 (1954).

_____ “[E]ducation is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments” because “it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education.” *Brown*, 347 U.S. at 493. Indeed, “classifications involving the complete denial of education are in a sense unique, for they strike at the heart of equal protection values by involving the State in the creation of permanent class distinctions.” *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 U.S. 202, 234 (1982) (Blackmun, J., concurring).

For both good and ill, “the law can be a teacher.” *Garrett*, 531 U.S. at 375 (Kennedy, J., concurring). As with race discrimination, few governmental messages more profoundly affect individuals and their communities than segregation in education:

Segregation in education impacts on segregation throughout the community. Generations of citizens attend school with no opportunity to be a friend with persons with disabilities, to grow together, to develop an awareness of capabilities * * * [.] Awareness deficits in our young people who become our community leaders and employers perpetuate the discrimination fostered in the segregated educational system.

MO 1007 (Pat Jones). Indeed, discrimination in *public* schools is particularly harmful because “[p]ublic education must prepare pupils for citizenship in the Republic” and must teach “the shared values of a civilized social order.” *Bethel Sch. Dist. v. Fraser*, 478 U.S. 675, 681, 683 (1986). Combating discrimination in education thus prevents the grave harm to constitutional interests that arises from governmental

action that creates a substantial risk of relegating a class of individuals to society's sidelines – unable to participate meaningfully in public or civic life.

Accordingly, the evidence set forth above was more than adequate to support comprehensive prophylactic and remedial legislation, particularly compared to the record found sufficient in *Nevada Department of Human Resources v. Hibbs*, 538 U.S. 721 (2003), and *Lane*.¹⁸

III. As Applied To Discrimination In Education, Title II Is Congruent And Proportional To The Constitutional Rights At Issue And The History Of Discrimination

“The only question that remains is whether Title II is an appropriate response to this history and pattern of unequal treatment.” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1992. In deciding that question, the Court in *Lane* declined to “examine the broad range of Title II’s applications all at once, and to treat that breadth as the mark of the law’s invalidity.” *Ibid*. Instead, the Court concluded that the only question before it was “whether Congress had the power under § 5 to enforce the constitutional right of

¹⁸ As in *Lane*, “the record of constitutional violations in this case * * * far exceeds the record in *Hibbs*.” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1992. See also *id.* at 1991 (noting *Hibbs* record contained “little” evidence of “unconstitutional state conduct”); *id.* at 1992 n.17. And the record in the context of education far exceeds the record of unconstitutional treatment in judicial services. See *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1990 nn. 9 & 14, 1991. In its prior brief, the State challenged the quality and sources of this evidence, but the Supreme Court relied on precisely the same sources and types of information in reaching its conclusions in *Lane*. See, e.g., *id.* at 1990 nn.7-14 (relying on statutes and cases post-dating enactment of ADA); *id.* at 1991 (Task Force testimony and Breyer appendix in *Garrett*); *id.* at 1991 n.16 (conduct of local governments); *id.* at 1992 n.17 (noting *Hibbs* relied on legislative history to predecessor statute); *id.* at 1992 (congressional finding of persisting “discrimination” in public services).

access to the courts.” *Id.* at 1993. The question before this Court, then, is whether Title II is congruent and proportionate legislation as applied to the class of cases implicating access to education. See *ibid.*

A statutory remedy is valid under Section 5 where it is “congruent and proportional to its object of enforcing the right[s]” protected by the statute in the relevant context. *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1993. As applied to education, Title II is a congruent and proportional means of preventing and remedying the unconstitutional discrimination that Congress found exists both in education and in other areas of governmental services, many of which implicate fundamental rights.

As was true in *Lane* with respect to cases implicating access to courts and judicial services, “Congress’ chosen remedy for the pattern of exclusion and discrimination described above, Title II’s requirement of program accessibility is congruent and proportional to its object of enforcing” the rights of disabled persons seeking access to public schools. 124 S. Ct. at 1993. Further, like *Lane*, the “unequal treatment of disabled persons in the administration of” education has a “long history, and has persisted despite several legislative efforts to remedy the problem of disability discrimination.” *Ibid.*¹⁹ “Faced with considerable evidence of the

¹⁹ See Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-10, 79 Stat. 27; Elementary and Secondary Education Amendments of 1966, Pub. L. No. 89-750, 80 Stat. 1191; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Pub. L. No. 93-112, 87 Stat. 355; Education Amendments of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-380, 88 Stat. 484; Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EHA), Pub. L. No. 94-142, 89 Stat. 773; Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1983, Pub. L. No. 98-199, 97 Stat. 1357; Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984, Pub. L. No. 98-524, 98 Stat. 2435; Handicapped Children’s

shortcomings of previous legislative responses, Congress was justified in concluding that this ‘difficult and intractable proble[m]’ warranted ‘added prophylactic measures in response.’” *Ibid.*

“The remedy Congress chose is * * * a limited one.” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1993. The Title prohibits only discrimination “by reason of * * * disability,” 42 U.S.C. 12132, so that the States retain their discretion to exclude persons from programs, services, or benefits for any lawful reason unconnected with their disability or for no reason at all. Even though it requires States to take some affirmative steps to avoid discrimination, it “does not require States to compromise their essential eligibility criteria,” requires only “‘reasonable modifications’ that would not fundamentally alter the nature of the service provided,” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1993, and does not require States to “undertake measures that would impose an undue financial or administrative burden * * * or effect a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service,” *id.* at 1994.

With respect to physical access to facilities, Congress required only “reasonable measures to remove architectural and other barriers to accessibility.” *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1993. Having found that facilities may be made accessible at little

Protection Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-372, 100 Stat. 796; Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-457, 100 Stat. 1145; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 *et seq.* See also *Honig v. Doe*, 484 U.S. 305, 310 n.1 (1988) (“Congress’ earlier efforts to ensure that disabled students received adequate public education had failed in part because the measures it adopted were largely hortatory.”).

additional cost at the time of construction,²⁰ Congress imposed reasonable architectural standards for new construction and alterations. See 28 C.F.R. 35.151.

At the same time,

in the case of older facilities, for which structural change is likely to be more difficult, a public entity may comply with Title II by adopting a variety of less costly measures, including relocating services to alternative, accessible sites and assigning aides to assist persons with disabilities in accessing services. § 35.150(b)(1). Only if these measures are ineffective in achieving accessibility is the public entity required to make reasonable structural changes. *Ibid.* And in no event is the entity required to undertake measures that would impose an undue financial or administrative burden, threaten historic preservation interests, or effect a fundamental alteration in the nature of the service. §§ 35.150(a)(2), (a)(3).

Lane, 124 S. Ct. at 1993-1994.

As applied to discrimination in education, these requirements serve a number of important and valid prophylactic and remedial functions.

In public education, Title II often applies directly to prohibit unconstitutional discrimination against the disabled, *i.e.*, discrimination which is based on irrational stereotypes about, or animosity toward, people with disabilities. Indeed, education is an area where discrimination against the disabled will not infrequently fail rational basis review. For example, Title II enforces the Equal Protection requirement of rationality when it applies to prohibit inflicting corporal punishment against a deaf

²⁰ See GAO, Briefing Reports on Costs of Accommodations, *Americans with Disabilities Act: Hearing Before the House Comm. on Small Business*, 101st Cong., 2d Sess. 190 (1990); see also, *e.g.*, S. Rep. No. 116, 101st Cong., 1st Sess. 10-12, 89, 92 (1989); H.R. Rep. No. 485, Pt. 2, 101st Cong., 2d Sess. 34 (1990).

student for failure to follow spoken instructions,²¹ or denying a disabled student admission to a public college because “it would be ‘disgusting’ to [her] roommates to have to live with a woman with a disability.” WA 1733. Title II further enforces the constitutional protection against state action based on irrational stereotypes, such as denying admission to state universities or training programs based on the assumption that blind people cannot teach in public schools, SD 1476, be competent rehabilitation counselors, *Leg. Hist.* 1225, or succeed in a music course, *id.* at 1224.

Moreover, given the history of unconstitutional treatment of students with disabilities, Congress was entitled to conclude that there exists a real risk that some state officials may continue to make decisions about how students with disabilities should be treated based on invidious class-based stereotypes or animus that would be difficult to detect or prove. See 42 U.S.C. 12101(a)(7) (congressional finding that individuals with disabilities “have been faced with restrictions and limitations, subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treatment, and relegated to a position of political powerlessness in our society, based on characteristics that are beyond the control of such individuals and resulting from stereotypic assumptions not truly indicative of the individual ability of such individuals to participate in, and contribute to, society.”) In such a situation, the risk of unconstitutional treatment is sufficient to warrant Title II’s prophylactic response. See *Hibbs*, 538 U.S. at 722-723, 735-737

²¹ See *Education for All Handicapped Children, 1973-1974: Hearings Before the Subcomm. on the Handicapped of the Senate Comm. on Labor & Public Welfare*, 93d Cong., 1st Sess. 384, 793 (1973) (Christine Griffith) (first-grade student “was spanked every day” because her deafness prevented her from following instructions).

(remedy of requiring “across-the-board” provision of family leave congruent and proportional to problem of employers relying on gender-based stereotypes).

Title II’s prophylactic remedy acts to detect and prevent difficult-to-uncover discrimination against disabled students that could otherwise evade judicial remedy. By proscribing governmental conduct the discriminatory effects of which cannot be or have not been adequately justified, Title II prevents covert intentional discrimination against disabled students and provides strong remedies for the lingering effects of past unconstitutional treatment against the disabled in the education context. See *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1986 (“When Congress seeks to remedy or prevent unconstitutional discrimination, § 5 authorizes it to enact prophylactic legislation proscribing practices that are discriminatory in effect, if not intent, to carry out the basic objectives of the Equal Protection Clause.”). Further, by prohibiting insubstantial reasons for denying accommodations to the disabled, Title II prevents invidious discrimination and unconstitutional treatment in the day-to-day actions of state officials exercising discretionary powers over disabled students. See *Hibbs*, 538 U.S. at 736 (Congress justified in concluding that perceptions based on stereotypes “lead to subtle discrimination that may be difficult to detect on a case-by-case basis.”). Moreover, in requiring reasonable steps to permit physical access to existing school buildings and to design new school buildings with the needs of individuals with disabilities in mind, Title II responds to the lingering effects of a long history of exclusion of people with disabilities from schools.

As has long been recognized in the areas of race and gender discrimination,²² eliminating discrimination and segregation in education is critical to remedy and prevent discrimination in access to public services and public life generally. “A proper remedy for an unconstitutional exclusion * * * aims to eliminate so far as possible the discriminatory effects of the past and to bar like discrimination in the future.” *United States v. Virginia*, 518 U.S. 515, 547 (1996). As the Supreme Court’s cases upholding congressional bans on literacy tests as proper remedial and prophylactic legislation recognize, discrimination and segregation in education have enduring effects that reach beyond the educational context and affect individuals’ ability to exercise and enjoy the most basic rights and responsibilities of citizenship, including voting, access to public officials, and equal opportunities to participate in public programs and services. Title II’s application to education is thus congruent and proportional because a simple ban on discrimination would have frozen in place the effects of States’ prior official exclusion and isolation of individuals with disabilities, which had the effect of rendering the disabled invisible to government officials and planners, thereby creating a self-perpetuating spiral of segregation, stigma, and neglect. See *Gaston County*, 395 U.S. 285, 289-290 (1969) (constitutionally administered literacy test banned because it perpetuates the effects of past discrimination).²³

²² See, e.g., *Brown*, 347 U.S. at 493; *Mississippi University for Women v. Hogan*, 458 U.S. 718, 729-730 (1982).

²³ See also *South Carolina v. Katzenbach*, 383 U.S. 301, 308 (1966); *Katzenbach v. Morgan*, 384 U.S. 641 (1966); *Oregon v. Mitchell*, 400 U.S. 112 (1970).

By reducing stereotypes and misconceptions, integration in education also reduces the likelihood that constitutional violations in other areas implicating fundamental rights will recur. Cf. *Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring*, 527 U.S. 581, 600 (1999) (segregation “perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life”). For instance, requiring physical accessibility of schools serves the broader purpose of protecting access to other government services that are often conducted in schools. Congress could reasonably determine that making school buildings reasonably accessible would have the prophylactic effect of avoiding unconstitutional denials of the right to vote, to participate in government board meetings, or gain access to other government services implicating fundamental rights, when these activities take place in local schools.

Further, the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from public education was a critical component of the historic eugenics movement, which sought to eliminate and completely exclude individuals with disabilities from public life through systematic, government-endorsed programs of forced institutionalization and sterilization. Indeed, Congress and the Supreme Court have long acknowledged the Nation’s “history of unfair and often grotesque mistreatment” of persons with disabilities. *Cleburne*, 473 U.S. at 454 (Stevens, J., concurring); see also *Olmstead*, 527 U.S. at 608 (1999) (Kennedy, J., concurring) (“[O]f course, persons with mental disabilities have been subject to historic mistreatment, indifference, and hostility.”); *Cleburne*, 473 U.S. at 446 (“Doubtless, there have been and there will continue to be instances of discrimination against the retarded that are in fact invidious.”);

Alexander v. Choate, 469 U.S. 287, 295 n.12 (1985) (“well-cataloged instances of invidious discrimination against the handicapped do exist”). From the 1920s to the 1960s, the eugenics movement labeled persons with mental and physical disabilities as “sub-human creatures” and “waste products” responsible for poverty and crime. *Spectrum* at 18 n.5; *id.* at 20. Every single State, by law, provided for the segregation of persons with mental disabilities and, frequently, epilepsy. A critical component of that program of official segregation and isolation was the exclusion of the disabled from public schools, as well as from other state services and privileges of citizenship. Children with mental disabilities “were excluded completely from any form of public education.” *Rowley*, 458 U.S. at 191; see also *State v. Board of Educ.*, 172 N.W. 153, 153 (Wis. 1919) (approving exclusion of a boy with cerebral palsy from public school because he “produces a depressing and nauseating effect upon the teachers and school children”) (noted at *Leg. Hist.* 2243); see generally T. Cook, *The Americans with Disabilities Act: The Move to Integration*, 64 *Temple L. Rev.* 393, 399-407 (1991).

Title II’s application to education thus targets a constitutional problem that is greater than the sum of its parts. Comprehensively protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities in the educational context directly remedies and prospectively prevents the persistent imposition of inequalities on a single class, *Lane*, 124 S. Ct. at 1988-1992, and the chronic distribution of benefits and services, whether through legislation or executive action, in a way that “impos[es] special disabilities upon groups disfavored by virtue of circumstances beyond their control.” *Plyler*, 457 U.S. at 217 n.14. Title II’s application to education thus combats and overcomes a historic and enduring problem of broad-based unconstitutional treatment of the disabled,

including programmatic exclusions from public life and education that sought to accomplish the very “kind of ‘class or caste’ treatment that the Fourteenth Amendment was designed to abolish,” *ibid.*

CONCLUSION

The Eleventh Amendment is no bar to plaintiffs’ claims under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

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CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I hereby certify that pursuant to the Court's supplemental order of June 7, 2004, the attached Corrected Supplemental Brief for the United States as Intervenor is proportionally spaced, has a typeface of 14 points, and is not longer than 30 pages.

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Date: July 21, 2004

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that two copies of the foregoing Corrected Supplemental Brief for the United States as Intervenor were served by overnight mail, postage prepaid, on July 21, 2004, to the following counsel of record:

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