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**Date:** 7/24/2015 3:13:57 PM  
**Subject:** Judy Heumann and Lex Frieden on ADA25 and the IL Movement

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**July 24, 2015**

## **Judy Heumann and Lex Frieden on ADA25 and the IL Movement**

As part of an ongoing [ACL Blog](#) series, disability community leaders are sharing their reflections on the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act as well as the efforts that made it possible.

### **Judy Heumann: Yes, we did! And there's more to do.**

*Judy Heumann is a lifelong civil rights advocate for disadvantaged people and the Special Advisor for International Disability Rights at the U.S. Department of State.*

The independent living movement is intergenerational and cross-sectional. Advocates for the rights of disabled people of all ages are clearly and consistently stating that we have a right to education, employment, and social inclusion, regardless of our age, and we are not going to let go of our independence and dignity. These are principles that form the foundation of the independent living movement which began in the 1970s, but continues on to this day.

Today at the age of 67, it is very clear that the movement has benefited me and will continue to benefit me and millions of others like me. Those in the independent living movement can say 'Yes, we did', but we should also say, 'there's more to do.' This is true not only for ourselves, but for people around the world.

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### **Lex Frieden: Celebrating Progress, Re-envisioning the Future**

*Lex Frieden is a disability rights activist who is regarded as a founder of the independent living movement and was instrumental in drafting the ADA.*

During this season of celebration, I have an opportunity to expound on what has been achieved since that summer day, when I sat with 3,000 friends and colleagues on the White House lawn and listened to the President assert, "We will not accept, we will not excuse, we will not tolerate discrimination in America." He reassured businesses by insisting that the ADA would "unlock a splendid resource of untapped human potential." However moving, it is important for post-ADA advocates to understand that the disability movement started long before that day...

Just as early disability rights and independent living advocates combined their efforts to produce a much larger, more encompassing, and more powerful disability movement, disability advocates must now reach out to embrace the aging movement. We must merge our interests and focus collective energy on expanding options for community living and ensuring equal opportunity, full inclusion, and integration across the disability and aging spectrums.

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