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**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL HIGHLIGHTS AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT ANNIVERSARY
BY CALLING FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

***Raoul Leads Coalition of Attorneys General Urging Congressional Passage of All Stations
Accessibility Program Act of 2021***

Chicago — To mark the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Attorney General Kwame Raoul today led a coalition of 18 state attorneys general urging Congress to pass legislation that will allow people with disabilities to have equal access to public transportation. The All Stations Accessibility Program Act of 2021 (ASAP) will support state and local government efforts to provide accessible public transportation to people with disabilities.

The ASAP Act was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Tammy Duckworth, D-IL; Senate Committee on Banking Housing and Urban Affairs Chair Sherrod Brown, D-OH; and Special Committee on Aging Chair Bob Casey, D-PA. Companion legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives by Illinois Reps. Jesús "Chuy" García and Marie Newman. The legislation would establish a federal grant program to support local transit and commuter rail authorities to upgrade existing stations to meet or exceed the ADA's accessibility standards. [In a letter to congressional leadership](#), Raoul and the coalition argue that the legislation is essential to addressing barriers to transportation, which also serve as barriers preventing people with disabilities from fully participating in society.

"The Americans with Disabilities Act finally prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities under the law, and it was a hard-won victory for activists who demanded equality and opportunity for people with disabilities," Raoul said. "Despite the progress made since the ADA was enacted, literal barriers continue to stand in the way of people with disabilities and essentials such as housing and employment. The ASAP Act is a critical tool that will help state and local governments provide accessible public transportation to people with disabilities, and I urge Congress to act before we recognize another anniversary of the ADA."

"It's imperative that transit systems continue to make accessibility a priority, and I was proud to introduce the ASAP Act to help ensure local transit authorities have the funding they need to expedite station upgrades that meet or exceed accessibility standards," Duckworth said. "I applaud Illinois Attorney General Raoul and his colleagues across the nation who recognize the importance of making accessibility a priority, and I look forward to continuing to work together to make this country truly accessible."

"Today marks the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), yet many public transportation systems that people rely on to get to work, access critical services, and see friends and family remain inaccessible," said Rep. García. "That's why I'm grateful that this coalition of Attorneys General led by Illinois AG Kwame Raoul supports the All Stations Accessibility Program Act. This legislation ensures that local transit agencies, including the Chicago Transit Authority, receive the federal resources they need to make full accessibility a reality."

"Building world-class, equitable public transportation starts by ensuring every station, bus and train across our nation is equally accessible to everyone. Thirty-one years after the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law, our nation has yet to live up to that goal," said Congresswoman Newman. "By passing the All Stations Accessibility Program Act, we can finally provide America's cities with the funding they need to ensure their public transit systems can better serve all riders, especially those with disabilities and our

seniors. I couldn't be more thankful to have Illinois Attorney General Raoul and this coalition of attorneys general join us in this fight to ensure this legislation becomes law and a reality for millions of Americans."

The landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law July 26, 1990, and was designed to guarantee people with disabilities equal opportunities to be active participants in society. Considered by many to be the most sweeping civil rights legislation since passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the ADA resulted from tireless advocacy by disabled activists who demanded civil rights for people with disabilities. In passing the ADA, Congress acknowledged the historic isolation and segregation of people with disabilities, as well as the discrimination they experience in critical areas such as employment, housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, recreation, voting and more.

In their letter to congressional leadership, Raoul and the attorneys general point out that notwithstanding the progress enshrined in the ADA, more work is needed to ensure people with disabilities can actively participate in their communities. Despite the ADA becoming law more than 30 years ago, studies show that people with disabilities continue to face challenges in obtaining employment and housing. A 2020 report issued by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that only 17.9% of people with disabilities were employed, compared to 61.8% of people without disabilities. In their letter to Congress, Raoul and the coalition argue that access to transportation is critical to addressing disparities in housing and employment and allowing people with disabilities to participate equally in society.

The Federal Transit Administration has reported that nearly 20% of all public transit stations were not ADA accessible in 2019. The ADA's Standards for Accessible Design set minimum standards for what makes a facility accessible to people with disabilities. However, the ADA allows public entities to defer making architectural changes to facilities constructed prior to the ADA's enactment when changes would pose an undue financial burden. As a result, Raoul and the coalition point out, state and local governments' fiscal constraints have frequently prevented them from making all legacy transportation systems fully accessible.

The ASAP Act will establish a grant program dedicated to assisting state and local governments in upgrading legacy rail stations, or those that were in operation before the ADA's effective date. The program would appropriate \$10 billion over 10 years, and each grant will fund 90% of a project's net cost. Recipients can use grant funding to develop plans for projects aimed at accommodating individuals with a wide range of disabilities, including physical, sensory and developmental disabilities. Each project plan must also ensure equitable service to all riders regardless of income, age, race or ability.

Joining Raoul in calling upon Congress to pass the ASAP Act are the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia and Washington.