



Adopted April 29, 2014

New Equal, Dignified Access for All Resolution

Whereas in 2012, 12 percent of the civilian population in the United States reported having a disability; and

Whereas in 2012, 16 percent of veterans, amounting to more than 3,500,000 people, received service-related disability benefits; and

Whereas in 2011, the percentage of working-age people in the United States who reported having a work limitation due to a disability was 7 percent, which is a 20-year high; and

Whereas the Act entitled “An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped” approved August 12, 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4151 et seq.) (referred to in this preamble as the “Architectural Barriers Act of 1968”), was enacted to ensure that certain federally funded facilities are designed and constructed to be accessible to people with disabilities and requires that physically handicapped people have ready access to, and use of, post offices and other Federal facilities; and

Whereas automatic doors, not mandated by either the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 or the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), provide a

greater degree of self-sufficiency and dignity for people with disabilities and the elderly, who may have limited strength to open a manually operated door; and

Whereas a report commissioned by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (referred to in this preamble as the “Access Board”), an independent Federal agency created to ensure access to federally funded facilities for people with disabilities, recommends that all new buildings for use by the public should have at least one automated door at an accessible entrance, except for small buildings where adding such doors may be a financial hardship for the owners of the buildings; and

Whereas states and municipalities have begun to recognize the importance of automatic doors in improving accessibility; and

Whereas the laws of the State of Connecticut require automatic doors in certain shopping malls and retail businesses, the laws of the State of Delaware require automatic doors or calling devices for newly constructed places of accommodation, and the laws of the District of Columbia have a similar requirement; and

Whereas the Facilities Standards for the Public Buildings Service, published by the General Services Administration, requires automation of at least one exterior door for all newly constructed or renovated facilities managed by the General Services Administration, including post offices; and

Whereas from 2006 to 2011, 71 percent of the complaints received by the Access Board regarding the Architectural

Barriers Act of 1968 concerned a post office or other facility of the United States Postal Service; and

Whereas the United States Postal Service employs approximately 522,000 people, making it the second-largest civilian employer in the United States; and

Whereas approximately 3,200,000 people visit 1 of the 31,857 post offices in the United States each day; and

Whereas the United States was founded on principles of equality and freedom, and these principles require that all people, including people with disabilities, are able to engage as equal members of society.

Therefore, be it resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans and its affiliates:

- (1) recognize the immense hardships that disabled United States citizens must overcome every day; and
- (2) reaffirm their support of the Architectural Barriers Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and full compliance of the laws; and
- (3) recommend that the United States Postal Service and other public agencies install power-assisted doors to ensure equal access to all citizens; and
- (4) pledge to continue to work to identify and rectify the barriers that are preventing many United States citizens from having equal access to the services provided by the Federal Government.

Be it further resolved that the Alliance for Retired Americans urges Congress to support House Concurrent Resolution 67

and Senate Concurrent Resolution 26 to get power doors installed in Post Offices and other federal buildings.