The Advocates for Human Rights’ Oral Statement on Article 11, CRPD

My name is Louise Rosenbaum, and I represent The Advocates for Human Rights. We thank the committee for its attention to the issue of persons with disabilities under Article 11. For this oral statement, we draw upon interviews we conducted with Ukrainians since the war began to highlight the human rights violations as well as potential remedies.

First, the war has disrupted the delivery of essential medications. For example, one woman takes three immunotherapy medications she could get only through a humanitarian blood center. When the war began, she went without her medications for two months. Access to essential medications can become a life and death matter in any state where there is war, social disruption or natural disasters. In states like the U.S., limits on the quantity of certain types of medications a person may obtain exacerbate this problem. All states should examine their policies to assess whether they unnecessarily limit the quantity of lifesaving drugs persons can get at one time, restrictions which can endanger the lives and well-being of persons with disabilities in the event of an unexpected humanitarian or natural disaster.

Second, we heard reports that Russians are removing ill people and persons with disabilities from hospitals and orphanages and transporting them to “filtration camps.” For example, one interviewee has a friend in Mariupol with cancer, who was transported to a filtration camp in Russia. The state or other appropriate tribunals must investigate these forcible transfers as violations of humanitarian law and human rights. They must identify, investigate, prosecute and punish perpetrators, as well as provide reparations to victims.

Finally, one mother has an 18-year-old son living with severe disabilities due to a genetic condition. When he turned 18, he was required to register for service in the military. The process and paperwork required to get an exemption have been frustrating and exhausting for his mother. Additionally, the paperwork needed to ensure she is formally identified as his guardian and for him to maintain state pension support is complicated and demoralizing, requiring her to obtain a medical confirmation that she herself does not have psychosocial disabilities. States must examine their laws to ensure this process is more manageable and does not place an undue burden on such families.

Thank you.