**At the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 1990, President George H. W. Bush stated:**

**“Three weeks ago we celebrated our nation's Independence Day. Today we're here to rejoice in and celebrate another 'independence day,' one that is long overdue. With today's signing of the landmark Americans for Disabilities Act, every man, woman, and child with a disability can now pass through once-closed doors into a bright new era of equality, independence, and freedom." [*Source: Remarks of President George Bush at the Signing of the ADA (eeoc.gov/eeoc/history/35th/videos/ ada\_signing\_text.html)]***

**The ADA was the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities. It was a collaborative effort of Democrats, Republicans, the legislative and the executive branches, federal and state agencies, and people with and without disabilities.**

**The ADA Anniversary is a time that we can reflect positively on a law that has made a great impact on the lives of people with disabilities and our country over the past 22 years. The message is powerful because it clearly states the Congressional intent that the law is intended “to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.**

The ADA is divided into five titles (or sections) that relate to different areas of public life. Title I relates to Employment.

**Title I (Employment)**

Equal Employment Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities

This title is designed to help people with disabilities access the same employment opportunities and benefits available to people without disabilities. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations to qualified applicants or employees. A “reasonable accommodation” is a change that accommodates employees with disability without causing the employer “undue hardship” (too much difficulty or expense).

This portion of the law is regulated and enforced by the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/disability.cfm) [1]. Employers with 15 or more employees must comply with this law. The regulations for Title I define disability, establish guidelines for the reasonable accommodation process, address medical examinations and inquiries, and define “direct threat” when there is significant risk of substantial harm to the health or safety of the individual employee with a disability or others.

For more information on the ADA, please visit the chapter’s website under the “About” button and look for Diversity & Inclusion for a link to the official ADA website:http://www.ada.gov/ada\_intro.htm