

DISABILITY RIGHTS PATRIOTS

Philadelphia, PA

Sunday, May 14, 1989

On the eve of a most important court case, ADAPT vs Burnley, which argued the importance of accessible buses to the independence and civil rights of Americans with disabilities, the irony was not lost on the ADAPT activists that this case was being argued in Philadelphia, the city often called the cradled of our Constitution, our government, and home to so many supporters of the Abolitionist and Suffragette movements.

This was the third day of ADAPT's spring action. Day One had seen activists demand and force a meeting with US Attorney General, Richard Thornburg. Day Two had activists physically shutting down buses and traffic as they left their chairs to demonstrate the difficulty of boarding buses without lifts. For this action finale - a planned march from Independence Hall to the Liberty Bell and evening vigil for the next day's court case, ADAPT activists, including Joe Carle, Diane Coleman, and Bob Kafka (*L to R*), donned period clothing and hoisted a new flag, one with stars in the shape of the access symbol.

ADAPT took over the monument, circling the Liberty Bell for several hours to bring awareness to the lawsuit. The Dept. of Transportation mandated only 3% of their budget be designated for providing accessible transit. This low investment translated to terrible transportation for people with disabilities. Ultimately, ADAPT would win the case and much of the revised regulatory language would come to be incorporated into Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act the following year.



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