



Briefing Note 8: Bill C-81 – *Accessible Canada Act*

Recognizing Indigenous Persons with Disabilities and Intersecting Identities

How does Bill C-81 currently address this issue?

Bill C-81 does not specifically address barriers experienced by Indigenous persons with disabilities.

Bill C-81 recognizes that all persons must have the same opportunities regardless of their disabilities or how their disabilities interact with their personal and social characteristics. However, the Bill does not explicitly address intersectionality or the unique experiences of women and girls with disabilities.

Why is this concerning?

It is deeply concerning that Bill C-81 does not address multiple and intersectional barriers experienced by Indigenous persons with disabilities.

Disability communities are diverse. Disability communities and persons with disabilities want laws and policies to recognize and address this diversity. This is necessary so that laws and policies will have a meaningful impact on the lived experiences of all persons with disabilities.

In 2017 the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recommended that Canada address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination in legislation and public policies. Bill C-81 is an opportunity to do so.

How should Bill C-81 be changed?

The following points must be added to Bill C-81 as principles (section 6 of the Bill):

- Persons with disabilities disproportionately live in conditions of poverty.
- Persons with disabilities are diverse and experience multiple and intersecting barriers on the basis of disability or multiple disabilities, race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, genetic characteristics, and/or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted or in respect of which a record suspension has been ordered.
- Women and girls with disabilities experience unique and intersecting barriers.

To ensure these principles are implemented, Bill C-81 must require that:

- All accessibility standards and regulations made under the *Accessible Canada Act* advance the purpose and address the principles of the Act.
- The Government of Canada works with Indigenous communities and First Nations to determine how the Bill will address barriers experienced by these communities, including the recognition of Indigenous Sign Languages.

Additional Advocacy Points:

To ensure that the *Accessible Canada Act* stays true to the maxim “nothing about us without us”, we are asking Senators to support changes to the Bill that recognize the diverse experiences and identities of persons with disabilities.