

## Sample Letter to Congressional Delegates

July \_\_\_\_, 2001

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

As someone who has benefited from the services of the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative, our state's project funded under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, and on behalf of thousands of citizens with disabilities of all ages in our state, I write to urge you to include among your list of appropriations' priorities an amendment in the FY 2002 Labor-HHS-ED Appropriations bill that would provide for the continuation of the state grant program under Title I of the Assistive Technology Act of 1998.

(Please add information about what DATI has meant to you, and what you would miss if DATI were not in existence: the quarterly newsletter, the website, fact sheets, training, information about assistive technology and referral to other assistive technology resources, conferences, no-cost equipment loan, funding information and processes, technical assistance, a catalyst for collaboration among stakeholders, and any other support you or others you know received from DATI.)

Funding under the Assistive Technology Act of 1998 supports State Assistive Technology (AT) Programs in 56 states and territories. The state grant program improves access to assistive technology for people with disabilities and promotes the universal design of information technology so that people with disabilities will not be left out of the digital revolution. In his "New Freedom" Initiative, President Bush acknowledges the importance of technology for people with disabilities by proposing substantial increases in the federal investment in assistive technology.

Current law includes a provision requiring a gradual sunset of state AT programs. If this amendment is not adopted, nine state programs will be eliminated on September 30th of this year, and Delaware will lose its funding in FY 2004. Therefore, it is essential that this problem be corrected this year. In order to ensure the continuation of the state AT programs, we are asking for:

- 1) \$34 million to be targeted to Title I of the Assistive Technology Act to ensure at least \$500,000 per state; and
- 2) An amendment to be adopted that will waive the sunset provision in the Assistive Technology Act.

Please note that we are not requesting an increase in funding over that appropriated for the AT Act projects in FY '99 and '00. We are simply asking that a portion of the existing money be reallocated from Title III to Title I of the Act.

Sincerely,