



25th Annual U.S. Conference on DISABILITY
October 7th, 2026

**25 Years of Progress:
Honoring the Legacy of Edward R. Leahy, Jr.
Disability Inclusion and Careers
Transforming Barriers into Opportunities**

**Presented by: The University of Scranton, Leahy College of Health Sciences and
The Edward R. Leahy, Jr., Endowment**

- 7:45 - 8:30 a.m. Registration and Continental Breakfast
- 8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Opening Remarks
Rev. Joseph G. Marina, S.J., President, the University of Scranton
Victoria Castellanos, Ph.D., Dean, The Leahy College of Health Sciences
Edward R. and Patricia Leahy, Honorary Conference Co-Chairs
- 8:45 – 9:15 a.m. “Disability Policy in 2026 / 2027: Major Challenges and Opportunities.”
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, former U.S. Senator for Pennsylvania
Leahy Distinguished Fellow in Public Service at The University of Scranton
- 9:15 – 10:15 a.m. “Disability Employment Now”
Mason Ameri, Ph.D., Professor, Rutgers Business School, Rutgers University
We all want a chance to contribute, to be trusted, and to belong. For people with disabilities, getting that chance can mean facing barriers that others rarely see. Drawing on my published research and work under review, I’ll share what happens when people apply for jobs, ask for support, book a place to stay, or try to vote. We’ll explore the vulnerability of sharing a disability, the judgments people encounter, and the possibilities and complications of remote work and AI. Along the way, we’ll consider how our everyday choices can help more people feel welcome and have a fair chance to participate.
- 10:15– 10:30 a.m. Break & Networking
- 10:30-11:30 a.m. “From Nonspeaking to Netflix: One Man's Autism Journey to Professional Speaker and Love on the Spectrum U.S.”
Kerry Magro, Ed.D., CEO and Founder of KFM Making a Difference
Dr. Kerry Magro shares his personal journey from being nonspeaking as a young child and diagnosed with autism at age four to becoming a professional speaker, author, disability advocate and consultant to Netflix’s Love on the Spectrum U.S. Through personal stories, professional experiences and lessons learned along the way, Kerry will explore self-advocacy, communication, inclusion, education, employment and the importance of seeing each person’s strengths and potential. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of autism and disability inclusion, along with practical ideas for supporting individuals in ways that promote belonging, independence and meaningful opportunities throughout the lifespan.
- 11:30 – 11:45 a.m. Break & Networking
- 11:45 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch & Awards
Blessing

Daniel Cosacchi, Ph.D., Vice President for Mission and Ministry, The University of Scranton

1:15 – 2:45 p.m.

“A Career Focus - Moving Forward Through Change”

Kathy West-Evans MPA, CRC and **John P. Evans**, Consultants and Co-Founders
Abilities United Consulting, LLC

As the world of work and employment policies for individuals with disabilities continue to evolve, how can we move forward together? This session will explore labor-force and labor-market trends, career options, and effective strategies for promoting and supporting the employment of individuals with disabilities. These strategies will include examples of effective collaboration between individuals with disabilities, businesses, agencies, stakeholders, and other partners.

2:45 – 3:00 p.m.

Break & Networking

3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

"Beyond Not Fade Away: Living with Loss, Learning to Ask for Help, and Finding Connection"

Rebecca Alexander, LCSW-R, MPH, RYT

What does inclusion look like when a person's access needs keep changing? Drawing on her experience living with progressive vision and hearing loss, Rebecca Alexander shares how Usher syndrome has shaped her education, career, and relationships since the publication of *Not Fade Away*. As a psychotherapist, author, and disability advocate, she brings both personal and professional insight to the realities of adapting at work, advocating for what you need, and learning to ask for help. Her talk will challenge students and disability services professionals to think beyond access as a one-time accommodation and consider the relationships that allow people to participate, contribute, and thrive.

4:30 p.m.

Closing Remarks

CONFERENCE GUIDELINES



Please ensure all electronic communication devices
are deactivated or configured to silent operation
during presentations.

We appreciate your kind cooperation.

