



CBCF Conference Reflections
By Tonya Bradley, 2018

My name is Tonya Bradley, and I reside in Houston, Texas. I am the Development Assistant for the ACLU of Texas, and I volunteer my time as a state-certified Community Health Worker and Lupus Support Group Facilitator. The most important accessibility accommodation for me was the captioning at the main events, as well as the use of microphones in the smaller sessions. Generally speaking, the microphones were not needed in the smaller sessions, but they were a great benefit. I have complete hearing loss in one ear, and I am not a candidate for a hearing aid, so I have no means for alternative adjustments.



Tonya on Day One of the Conference

Disability is important in the African-American community because there are a disproportionate number of African Americans that have disabilities (and more severe disabilities) in comparison to other races and ethnicities. There is a correlation between the higher number of disabilities in African Americans and a lower socio-economic status. The existing racial and ethnic disparities in healthcare and health education are another factor because continued lack of treatment for common and chronic illnesses can cause disabilities to manifest.

I am presently continuing my education in public affairs and public policy with a focus on health. The conference was beneficial to me because it helped me create a better framework for my advocacy. It also reminded me that I deserve a seat at the table despite my limitations. The conference also revealed to me that conversations regarding inclusion must go beyond race and gender. I was very pleased to hear the topic of disabilities mentioned in most sessions that I attended. Although the topic of disabilities was not missing, it was a very small part of the conversation. It inspires me to create a better model for intersectionality in regards to disability around diversity, inclusion, and economic advancement. The Conference Accessibility Initiative by JPMorgan Chase and the World Institute on Disability makes a difference for people with disabilities because it provides an opportunity to attend conferences that we may not be inclined to attend because of our disabilities. It also encourages us to be advocates for ourselves and identify areas that can be improved upon.



Tonya Bradley is the Development Assistant for the ACLU of Texas and volunteers as a state-certified Community Health Worker and Lupus Support Group Facilitator. As an African-American woman with an invisible disability, she advocates for citizens in underserved and impoverished communities to have access to healthcare and health/educational resources. She also strives to ensure that those who represent their communities are educating, advocating, and putting/keeping policies of inclusion and protection in place for everyone.

Tonya as a Disability Ambassador