When it comes to disability rights, the U.S. is a policy innovator rather than a policy laggard. Understanding why the U.S. was ahead in disability rights involves addressing the link between institutional activism and grassroots mobilization and between supply-side and demand-side explanations for sociopolitical change. I expand on the concept of political entrepreneurship and institutional activism to shed light on the relationship between nonprofit advocacy organizations, the use of direct-action tactics, and political institutions. An important theme in my dissertation is the way in which governments invite rebellion by providing rights through legislative action, and consequently, politicize new constituencies that then mobilize around those rights. Rather than assuming that social movements can only influence policy, I find that the non-recursive relationship between social movement activity and legislative outcomes fluctuates over time. I use original longitudinal organizational data on over 800 nonprofit organizations, protest event data from four newspapers, congressional testimony based on 1275 hearings, and data on the over 300 disability-related public laws passed by Congress across a 45-year period (1961-2006). I draw from a growing body of work in sociology and political science that explains the dynamic interplay between elite insiders and outside challengers.