

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1987

A BILL

To establish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of handicap.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assembled,

SHORT TITLE

SECTION 1. This Act may be cited as the "Americans with Disabilities Act of 1987".

FINDINGS AND PURPOSES

SEC. 2. (a) The Congress finds that --

(1) some thirty-six million Americans have one or more physical or mental disabilities, and this number is increasing as the population as a whole is growing older:

(2) historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate persons with disabilities, and, despite some improvements, discrimination against persons with disabilities continues to be a serious and pervasive social problem;

(3) discrimination against persons with disabilities persists in such critical areas as employment, housing, public accommodations, education, transportation, institutionalization, medical services, insurance, recreation, and access to public services:

(4) every day, people with disabilities encounter various forms of discrimination, including outright, intentional exclusion; paternalistic overprotection; architectural, transportation, and communication barriers; refusal to make modifications to existing facilities and practices: exclusionary qualification standards and criteria; segregation: and relegation to lesser services, benefits, and opportunities;

(5) the Nation's proper goals regarding persons with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and, wherever possible, economic self-sufficiency for such citizens: and

(6) the continuing existence of unfair and unnecessary barriers, discrimination, and prejudice denies people with disabilities the opportunity to compete on an equal basis and to pursue those opportunities for which our free society is justifiably famous, and costs our Nation billions of dollars in

unnecessary expenses resulting from dependency and non-productivity.

(b) The purposes of this Act are --

(1) to provide a clear and comprehensive National mandate for the elimination of discrimination against persons with disabilities;

(2) to provide a prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities commensurate in coverage with that afforded in statutes prohibiting race, sex, national origin, and religious discrimination;

(3) to provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against persons with disabilities; and

(4) to address the major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.

DEFINITIONS

SEC. 3. For purposes of this Act:

(1) "Physical or mental impairment" means --

(a) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: Neurological; musculoskeletal; special sense organs; respiratory, including speech organs; cardiovascular; reproductive; digestive; genitourinary; hemic and lymphatic; skin; and endocrine; or

(b) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.

The term "physical or mental impairment" includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, and drug addiction and alcoholism.

(2) " Perceived impairment" means being mistakenly regarded as having or treated as having a physical or mental impairment.

(3) "Record of impairment" means having a history of, or having been misclassified as having, a mental or physical impairment.

(4) "Reasonable accommodation" means providing or modifying devices, services, or facilities, or changing practices or procedures for the purpose of responding to the specific functional abilities of a particular person with a physical or mental impairment in order to provide an equal opportunity to participate in a particular program, activity, job, or other opportunity.

SCOPE OF DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

SEC. 4. No person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of handicap in any of the programs, activities, or operations of:

- (1) The Federal Government, any of its agencies and Departments, or the United States Postal Service:
- (2) Any recipient of Federal financial assistance.
- (3) Any Federal contractor, subcontractor, or licensee:
- (4) Any employer engaged in an industry affecting commerce and having 15 or more employees, any employment agency, or labor union:
- (5) Any seller, landlord, or other provider of housing covered by Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968:
- (6) Any public accommodation covered by Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:
- (7) Any person, company, or agency that engages in the business of interstate transportation of persons, goods, documents, or data;
- (8) Any person, company, or agency that makes use of the mails or interstate communications and telecommunications services for the business of selling, arranging or providing insurance:
- (9) Any state, or agency or political subdivision of a state.

FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

SEC. 5. (a) Subject to the standards and procedures established in section 6 of this Act, the following actions or omissions constitute discrimination on the basis of handicap:

(1) Subjecting a person to any of the following because of that person's mental or physical impairment, perceived impairment, or record of impairment:

(A) intentional exclusion; (B) unintentional exclusion; (C) segregation; (D) unequal or inferior services, benefits, or activities; or (E) less effective services, benefits, or activities.

(2) Establishing or imposing architectural, transportation, and communication barriers that prevent or limit the access or participation of persons with physical or mental impairments, or failing or refusing to remove such barriers.

(3) Failing or refusing to make a reasonable accommodation to permit an individual with a mental or physical impairment to

apply, have access to, or participate in a program, activity, job, or other opportunity.

or

(4) Imposing or applying qualifications standards, selection criteria, and eligibility criteria that screen out or disadvantage an individual because of a physical or mental impairment, perceived impairment, or record of impairment; or that disproportionately screen out or disadvantage persons with particular types of physical or mental impairments, perceived impairments, or record of impairments; unless such criteria or standards can be shown to be related to ability to perform or participate in essential components of the particular job, program, activity, or opportunity.

(b) The following actions or omissions do not constitute discrimination on the basis of handicap:

(1) Exclusion of or other denial of equal services, benefits, activities, or opportunities to a person for reasons wholly unrelated to the existence of or consequences of a physical or mental impairment, perceived impairment, or record of impairment;

or

(2) Exclusion of or other denial of equal services, benefits, activities, or opportunities to a person based upon a bona fide application of qualifications standards, selection criteria, performance standards, or eligibility criteria that are both reasonably necessary and related to the ability to perform or participate in the essential components of the particular job, program, activity, or opportunity.

LIMITATIONS ON THE DUTIES OF ACCOMMODATION AND BARRIER REMOVAL

SEC. 6. (a) The failure or refusal to remove architectural, transportation, and communication barriers as required under subsection Sea) (2) and to make reasonable accommodations required under subsection 5(a) (3) shall not constitute an unlawful act of discrimination on the basis of handicap if such modifications or barrier removal would fundamentally alter the essential nature or threaten the existence of the program, activity, business, or facility in question.

(b) Where substantial modifications to existing buildings and facilities are necessary in order to remove architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, as required under subsection 5(a) (2), such modifications shall, unless required earlier by other law or regulation, be made within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed two years from the effective date of this Act, except that regulations promulgated pursuant to section 7 of this Act may allow up to five years from the effective date of this Act where reasonably necessary for the completion of such modifications to particular classes of buildings and facilities.

(c) Where substantial modifications to existing platforms and stations of mass transportation systems are necessary in order to remove architectural, transportation, and communication barriers, as required under subsection 5(a) (2) of this Act, regulations promulgated pursuant to section 7 of this Act may, unless required earlier by other law or regulation, allow a reasonable period of time, in no event to exceed fifteen years from the effective date of this Act, for such modifications to be made.

REGULATIONS

SEC. 7. (a) (1) Within six months of the effective date of this Act, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board shall issue minimum guidelines, supplementing its existing Minimum Guidelines and Requirements for Accessible Design, to establish standards for the architectural, transportation, and communication accessibility of buildings, facilities, vehicles, and rolling stock subject to the requirements of this Act.

(2) Within one year of the effective date of this Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission shall promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the requirements of this Act as it applies to employment practices.

(3) Within one year of the effective date of this Act, the U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the requirements of this Act as it applies to sellers, landlords, and other providers of housing.

(4) Within one year of the effective date of this Act, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation shall promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the requirements of this Act as it applies to State and local transit systems and to those engaged in the business of interstate transportation.

(5) within one year of the effective date of this Act, the U.S. Secretary of Commerce shall promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the requirements of this Act as it applies to places of public accommodation.

(6) Within one year of the effective date of this Act, the U.S. Secretary of Labor shall promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the requirements of this Act as it applies to recipients of Federal contracts and subcontracts.

(7) Within one year of the effective date of this Act, the Attorney General of the United States shall promulgate regulations for the implementation and enforcement of the requirements of this Act as it applies to States and agencies and political subdivisions of States, and to those in the business of selling, arranging, or providing insurance.

(8) In addition to the regulations required pursuant to subsections (1) - (7), Federal executive agencies shall issue, within one year of the effective date of this Act, such additional regulations as shall be necessary to implement and enforce the requirements of this Act in regard to programs and activities that they conduct and in regard to agencies and persons which they license or to which they provide Federal financial assistance.

(b) Regulations of Federal agencies issued under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 shall remain in effect unless and until they are superseded by regulations promulgated under this Act. In no event shall regulations promulgated under this Act provide less protection against discrimination to persons with a physical or mental impairment, perceived impairment, or record of impairment than under existing regulations for the implementation of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

ENFORCEMENT

SEC. 8. (a) Any person who has been, or is about to be, subjected to discrimination on the basis of handicap in violation of this Act shall have the right to pursue such administrative enforcement procedures and remedies as are available in connection with the regulations issued pursuant to Section 7 of this Act. Agencies enforcing such regulations shall have the authority to order all appropriate remedial relief, including compliance orders, cutoff of Federal funds, rescission of Federal licenses, monetary damages, and back pay.

(b) In the event that (i) administrative enforcement procedures as contemplated in Sec. 8(a) are not available, (ii) that such enforcement procedures are not concluded within 180 days after the filing of a complaint of discrimination prohibited under this Act, or (iii) that the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution reached at the conclusion of such enforcement procedures, then any person who has been, or is about to be, subjected to discrimination on the basis of handicap in violation of this Act shall have the right to file a civil action for injunctive relief, monetary damages, or both in a district court of the United States.

(c) The district courts of the United States shall have jurisdiction of actions brought under this Act without regard to the amount in controversy.

(d) In any action commenced pursuant to this section, the court, in its discretion, may allow the prevailing party, other than the United States, a reasonable attorney's fee as part of the costs, and the United States shall be liable for costs the same as a private person.

EFFECTIVE DATE

SEC. 9. This Act shall take effect upon the date of its enactment.