

# DISCRIMINATION?

HAVE YOU BEEN physically or sexually assaulted, intimidated, or called names in your job or apartment because you have a disability?

CAN YOU not go to your favorite local restaurant or store because it is inaccessible to wheelchairs?

HAVE YOU been denied a job or housing because you have a disability?

WILL businesses or service providers not accept your requests for a reasonable accommodation?

**If so, you may be a victim of discrimination.**

## we can HELP!

**Call The Equal Rights Center (ERC) today!**

We will investigate your complaint and determine whether a violation has occurred. If appropriate, the ERC will assist you in protecting your legal rights. **All ERC services are provided free of charge and are fully confidential.**

File a complaint today:

- Call the ERC at **(202) 234-3062**, or
- Complete an ERC Complaint Form online at **[www.equalrightscenter.org/complaint](http://www.equalrightscenter.org/complaint)**.

Stay informed by becoming an ERC member today:

- Call the ERC at **(202) 234-3062**,
- Complete the ERC Membership Form online at **[www.equalrightscenter.org/membership](http://www.equalrightscenter.org/membership)**.

**[www.equalrightscenter.org](http://www.equalrightscenter.org)**



**The Equal Rights Center (ERC)**  
is a national non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to promoting equal opportunity for all. The ERC, and our thousands of members across the country, address issues of discrimination in housing, employment, disability rights, immigrant rights, LGBT rights, and access to public accommodations and government services.

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Have you been a  
victim of DISCRIMINATION  
because you have a  
DISABILITY?



The Equal Rights Center  
Advancing Civil Rights for All

# the NEED for CHANGE

Today, more than 57 million people in the United States, approximately one in five, have some form of disability. Since 1973, federal, state and local human rights acts have prohibited discrimination based on physical or mental disability.

Yet this huge segment of the population still remains a frequent target of discrimination. Daily, people with disabilities are denied the right to enjoy the same choices—where to work, eat, shop, sleep, and receive reasonable services—that able-bodied people take for granted.

Discrimination against people with disabilities is so pervasive that many individuals have stopped making formal complaints about the discrimination they experience. Today, renewed encouragement and action are essential in order to advance change.

# know YOUR RIGHTS

People with disabilities are protected against illegal discrimination in employment, public accommodations, government services, transportation, and telecommunications. This means that places of business and employment and other public accommodations are required to make:

- 1) A reasonable modification, and/or
- 2) A reasonable accommodation, in order for people with disabilities to enjoy day-to-day living on an equal basis with the rest of the population.

A **Reasonable Modification** is a structural change at a property which affords a person with a disability full use and enjoyment of the facility. Examples include: installing a ramp to an entrance door, widening doorways, lowering countertops, or installing grab bars.

A **Reasonable Accommodation** is a change in a rule, policy, practice, or service in order to give a person with a disability equal choice and opportunity. Examples include: assigning accessible parking spots, allowing service animals in “no pets allowed” areas, or reading a menu or instructions to someone who is blind.

People with disabilities are also protected from discrimination in housing in several ways. You cannot be denied housing merely because you, or a family member, have a disability. As well, apartments and condominiums are required to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities, and to allow a tenant at his or her own expense to make reasonable modifications to improve accessibility.

# who is PROTECTED

Federal, state, or local laws may protect against discrimination based on:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex
- Religion
- Whether one has children
- Mental or Physical Disability
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- Source of Income
- Status as a Domestic Violence Survivor

## the ERC IMPACT

The ERC, in response to complaints from people with disabilities, has:

- 1) Worked with developers to make nearly 20,000 housing units accessible, and
- 2) Worked with owners and operators to make more than 50,000 retail stores, restaurants, and hotels accessible.

Obtained the agreement of MetroAccess, the Washington D.C. area public transportation system for people with disabilities, to spend \$14 million to improve the training, equipment, and policies of MetroAccess.

*“Prior to this legal intervention, I had a feeling of ‘helplessness’ - that no one would recognize our plight, intercede, nor make [MetroAccess] provide us the same quality transit service that the non-disabled were currently receiving... When I heard the wonderful news, the feeling of ‘helplessness’ immediately dissipated”*

- Mary Wright, ERC member