

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on People with Disabilities and Special Needs to hold hearings regarding services for people with disabilities and general compliance with and enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WHEREAS, The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law in 1990 and amended in 2008, prohibits unjustified discrimination against people on the basis of their disabilities and requires that workplaces and public accommodations be accessible to people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, The ADA covers a wide range of physical and mental conditions, which need not be severe or permanent, including deafness, blindness, intellectual disabilities, partial or missing limbs or mobility impairments requiring the use of a wheelchair, Autism, cancer, cerebral palsy, diabetes, epilepsy, HIV infection, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder, and schizophrenia, among others; and

WHEREAS, Under the law, individuals with disabilities should enjoy freedom from discrimination and full and equal access to public accommodations, including government buildings, schools, housing, lodgings, transportation, recreation facilities, care providers, public displays, restaurants and stores; and

WHEREAS, Individuals with disabilities, most notably those who are deaf or hard of hearing, have speech difficulties, are blind or have low vision are also guaranteed telecommunications and internet access, which has led to the widespread installation of public telecommunications devices for the deaf, and to the establishment of telecommunications relay services in every U.S. state and territory; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, as people in the disability community marked the 25th Anniversary of the ADA's passage, it was widely noted that while people with disabilities' circumstances have certainly improved, notably in the areas of improved access to public services and the built environment and an increased understanding of the talent, abilities and contributions of people with disabilities, disparities have remained, particularly in employment, earned income, internet access, transportation, housing, education and health care; and

WHEREAS, According to the most recent available data from the United States Census Bureau, 12.7% of Philadelphians - over 200,000 people - self-identified as a person with a disability; and

WHEREAS, To ensure access to all City services and programs, an ADA self-evaluation was recently conducted to determine gaps in compliance, based on which the City created a draft ADA Transition Plan focused on Title II of the ADA, which prohibits discrimination based on disability for state and local government services, which had a standard one-month public comment period concluding November 15, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of the multi-year Transition Plan must involve continued input from the public, especially from those most affected, such as people with physical disabilities, sensory sensitivity, or other special needs of the built environment; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia can play a crucial role in removing barriers to full participation in society whether in employment, housing, transportation, education, or other areas; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Philadelphia does hereby authorize the Committee on People with Disabilities and Special Needs to hold hearings regarding services for people with disabilities and general compliance with and enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act.