



E-CONNECT NEWS

The Moore Center Legislative Updates

Tell Congress to OPPOSE H.R. 620

From our friends at GSIL...

The House of Representatives is planning to vote on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Education and Reform Act (H.R. 620) this Thursday, February 15th! That means we only have three days to stop this misguided bill.

H.R. 620 would weaken the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and make it harder for people with disabilities to participate in the mainstream of society.

This bill would remove any consequence for businesses with architectural barriers that violate the ADA unless and until a person with a disability provides them with a legal notice detailing how the business has violated the law.

After that, the person with a disability would have to wait for six months or more for the business to fix the problem. Further, businesses would no longer have to provide access but only to make “progress.”

A House Rules Committee hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 13 at 5:00 p.m. We are not sure if this hearing will be open to the public or will be held in secret. A vote on the House floor is likely to follow on Wednesday or Thursday. We need advocates to take action starting Friday, Feb. 9! Don't let Congress rip the heart out of this section of the ADA!

Take Action Now!

Contact your Representative today and urge them to vote NO on H.R. 620. See the contact information for NH's Representatives below:

Representative Carol Shea-Porter
1530 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5456
<https://shea-porter.house.gov/contact>
<https://twitter.com/repshaporter>

Representative Ann Kuster
137 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5206
Fax: (202) 225-2946
<http://kuster.house.gov/contact>
<https://twitter.com/RepAnnieKuster>

Keep your message simple. Use the background information above as well as the talking points below to discuss the dangers of this bill, and share your personal stories about how the ADA provides you greater access to your community! Let them know that their constituents will be watching how they vote and will hold them accountable!

Message / Talking Points

- Vote “NO” on H.R. 620, the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017.
- The ADA Education and Reform Act would seriously weaken the Americans with Disabilities Act and would turn people with disabilities into second-class citizens.
- H.R. 620 would require a person with a disability who encounters an access barrier to send an exactly written notice and gives the business owner 60 days to even acknowledge that there is a problem – and then another 120 days to begin to fix it. No other civil rights group is forced to wait 180 days to enforce their civil rights.
- The ADA is already very carefully crafted to take the needs of business owners into account. Compliance is simply not burdensome – existing businesses are only required to provide access when doing so is readily achievable. But this bill would remove any reason for businesses to comply. Instead, they can take a “wait and see” attitude, and do nothing until they happen to be sued or sent a notice letter. This shifts the burden of enforcing the ADA onto individuals with disabilities.
- Title III regulations of the ADA went into effect in 1992, providing accessibility standards for private businesses (also known as public accommodations). Businesses have had over 25 years to comply with these regulations.
- H.R. 620 calls for education by the Department of Justice (DOJ). But there are already extensive federal efforts to educate business owners about their ADA obligations, including the in-depth DOJ ADA website (ADA.gov), which received 30 million visits in 2016 and 2017, the DOJ ADA hotline, which received over

97,000 calls, extensive DOJ technical assistance materials, etc., and by the 10 federally-funded regional ADA Centers (ADATA.org) that provide in-depth resources and training in every state.

- Proponents of this bill have raised concerns about monetary damage awards. But that has nothing to do with the ADA, since the ADA does not allow money damages. Such damages are only available under a handful of state laws. This bill will do nothing to prevent damage awards under state laws.
- It is troubling that this bill blames people with disabilities for public accommodations' failure to comply with the ADA. Why should disabled people pay the price of an inaccessible environment, where we cannot live our lives like everyone else?

For those looking for additional ways to make a difference and get the word out, you can help in the fight to defeat H.R. 620 by participating in the following Days of Action:

On Monday, February 12, send EMAIL ACTIONS urging members of the House to VOTE NO on H.R. 620;

On Monday, February 12, ask your supporters and members to participate in the Save The ADA CALL IN DAY and tell their representative to VOTE NO on H.R. 620;

On Tuesday, February 13, let's get on SOCIAL MEDIA (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) and post your opposition to HR 620 all day long - #HandsOffMyADA, #StopHR620, #CripTheVote;

Any day, send a letter of opposition to HR 620 to all House offices;

On the day of the vote (Thursday, February 15), please CALL and TWEET all day and tell members of the House to VOTE NO!

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