

CAN YOU not join friends and family at a favorite local restaurant because the entrance is not accessible, or the tables do not accommodate your wheelchair?

CAN YOU not shop in a certain clothing store because your wheelchair cannot maneuver around the clothing racks?

HAVE YOU been denied service, or treated poorly, at a business because of your accent, religion, race, sexual orientation, or disability?

If so, you may be a victim of discrimination.

WE CAN HELP YOU

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 pursuing administrative and legal remedies. **All ERC services are provided free of charge and are fully confidential.**

File a complaint today:

- Call the ERC directly at (202) 234-3062, or
- Complete the ERC Complaint Form online at www.equalrightscenter.org/complaint.

Stay an informed resident by becoming an ERC member today:

- Call the ERC directly at (202) 234-3062, or
- Complete the ERC Membership Form online at www.equalrightscenter.org/membership.



www.equalrightscenter.org



The Equal Rights Center (ERC) is a comprehensive non-profit civil rights organization dedicated to identifying, challenging, and eliminating discrimination. With more than 25 years of advancing civil rights, today the ERC and our thousands of members address issues of discrimination in six areas: fair housing, fair employment, disability rights, access to public accommodations, access to government services, and immigrant rights.

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HAVE YOU BEEN A VICTIM OF DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS OR GOVERNMENT SERVICES?



**EQUAL RIGHTS CENTER
ADVANCING CIVIL RIGHTS**

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

The ability to freely move throughout society and partake in all services and activities is a right afforded to all residents. Yet today, thousands of people face barriers when they travel, eat out, shop, and more.

Whether it is a business owner who refuses service to members of a certain religion, a club that deters or denies members of a certain race, or a restaurant without a wheelchair-accessible entrance, discrimination in the public arena takes place on a daily basis.

For this reason, protections against illegal discrimination in public accommodations and government services are a crucial component to civil rights law. As a member of a protected class, you are guaranteed equal enjoyment and participation in public life.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Based on your membership in a protected class, businesses cannot:

- 1) **Deny you service,**
- 2) **Offer a worse service, or**
- 3) **Physically or sexually assault you, tell offensive jokes, intimidate, or call you names.**

Additionally, so that people with disabilities have full enjoyment of services, businesses must make:

- 1) **Reasonable modifications:** structural changes, such as installing an entrance ramp, and/or
- 2) **Reasonable accommodations:** changes in rules, policies, or practices, such as assigning accessible parking.

Examples of public accommodations include:

- Restaurants
- Retail Stores
- Hotels
- Movie Theaters
- Private Schools (but not religious schools)
- Convention Centers
- Transportation Depots
- Zoos
- Transportation
- Doctors' Offices
- Day Care Centers
- Funeral Homes
- Homeless Shelters
- Recreation facilities: sport stadiums, fitness clubs, etc.
- Places where courses and examinations are provided

Discrimination is also prohibited in programs, services, and activities of the federal, state and local governments.

Federally protected classes include:

- Race
- Color
- National Origin
- Sex
- Religion
- Whether one has children
- Mental or Physical Disability

State or locally protected classes may also include:

- Sexual Orientation
- Gender Identity
- Marital Status
- Source of Income
- Domestic Violence Survivor
- Age

THE ERC IMPACT

- In response to complaints from people with disabilities about access to public places, the ERC has forced owners and operators to make more than 10,000 retail stores, restaurants, and hotels accessible.
- Additionally, the ERC has helped many people assert their requests and mediate a positive resolution.

Donna, for example, came to the ERC after her request for a reasonable accommodation, to modify her phone bill for her disability, went ignored. After talking to the service provider, the ERC was able to secure Donna's request.

"I had been turned away by other organizations. But I came to the ERC and they were able to handle the problem quickly and to my full satisfaction."

-Donna Simms, ERC client