

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT DAY

JULY 26



AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

July 26th is known as Americans with Disabilities Act Day. The day commemorates the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which marked its 30th anniversary in 2020, and is a key accomplishment in the long and ongoing Disability Rights Movement. The act ensures the equal treatment of people with disabilities by prohibiting discrimination in employment, services rendered by state and local governments, places of public accommodation, transportation, and telecommunications services.

The battle to pass the ADA was long and hard fought. In the 1980s, activists started lobbying to consolidate individual pieces of legislation that had been passed after decades of protests and activism into one broad statute akin to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Passage of the ADA was stalled until the "Capital Crawl" of March 12, 1990. On this day, over 60 protesters abandoned their mobility-assistance devices to crawl up the steps of the Capital in an effort to demonstrate the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

The ADA was passed four months later.



VANDERBILT
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(Excerpt from <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/backgrounders/disability-rights-movement>. Lane v. TN information from <https://www.disabilityrightstn.org>.)

LANE V. TENNESSEE

The case of *Lane v. Tennessee* was filed on behalf of six plaintiffs in the early 2000's against the state of Tennessee for violating Title II. The lawsuit came about after George Lane, a man with paraplegia, arrived for a hearing on the second floor of the local courthouse, only to find that there was no elevator. Mr. Lane had to crawl up two flights of stairs in order to make his hearing that day. When he returned to the courthouse for a follow-up hearing at a later date, he refused to crawl up the stairs again or be carried by officers to the courtroom. He was subsequently arrested and jailed for failure to appear.

The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in 2004, resulting in many changes to the policies and procedures of Tennessee's judicial branch, including a robust ADA policy still in effect.

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