



United States Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division
civilrights.justice.gov

Thank you for submitting a report to the Civil Rights Division.

Report successfully submitted

Please save your record number for tracking.



Your record number is: **271509-QFM**

What to expect

① We review your report

Our specialists in the Civil Rights Division carefully read every report to identify civil rights violations, spot trends, and determine if we have authority to help with your report.

② Our specialists determine the next step

We may decide to:

Open an investigation or take some other action within the legal authority of the Justice Department.

Collect more information before we can look into your report.

Recommend another government agency that can properly look into your report. If so, we'll let you know.

In some cases, we may determine that we don't have legal authority to handle your report and will recommend that you seek help from a private lawyer or local legal aid organization.

③ When possible, we will follow up with you

We do our best to let you know about the outcome of our review. However, we may not always be able to provide you with updates because:

We're actively working on an investigation or case related to your report.

We're receiving and actively reviewing many requests at the same time.

If we are able to respond, we will contact you using the contact information you provided in this report. Depending on the type of report, response times can vary. If you need to reach us about your report, please refer to your report number when contacting us. This is how we keep track of your submission.

What you can do next

① Contact local legal aid organizations or a lawyer if you haven't already

Legal aid offices or members of lawyer associations in your state may be able to help you with your issue. American Bar Association, visit www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_services/flh-home or call (800) 285-2221 Legal Services Corporation (or Legal Aid Offices), to help you find a legal aid lawyer in your area visit www.lsc.gov/find-legal-aid or call (202) 295-1500

② Get help immediately if you are in danger

If you reported an incident where you or someone else has experienced or is still experiencing physical harm or violence, or are in immediate danger, please call 911 and contact the police.

Your submission

Contact

Contact information

Your name

Molly Cole

Email address

molly@ctsilc.org

Phone number

8608490686

Address

151 New Park Avenue, c/o NCAAA #75, Hartford, CT 06106

HARTFORD, Connecticut 06106

Are you now or have ever been an active duty service member?

No

Primary concern

What is your primary reason for contacting the Civil Rights Division?

Discriminated against in a commercial location or public place

Location

<https://civilrights.justice.gov/report/>

Please choose the type of location that best describes where the incident happened

Public space

Where did this happen?

Organization name

CT Legislative Office Building

Address

300 Capitol Avenue

-

HARTFORD, Connecticut

Personal characteristics

Do you believe any of these personal characteristics influenced why you were treated this way?

Disability (including temporary or recovered and including HIV and drug addiction)

Date

When did this happen?

3/1/2023

Personal description

In your own words, describe what happened

At a public hearing for the Human Services Appropriations subcommittee, five individuals who are deaf/blind wanted to testify. They arranged an accommodation with the clerk to testify first, since the clerk had arranged for a sign language interpreter. At the start of the hearing all attendees were told that the sign language interpreter for the five individuals had not arrived. The clerk stated she would go back to these five individuals as soon as the interpreter arrived. After about 20 minutes, the interpreter arrived and interpreted testimony for the first two individuals. Then she announced that she was only hired for the first two, and was leaving. The other three individuals were upset. One kind person who accompanied them announced that he was not a certified interpreter, but would interpret for them, which he did.

This is again reflective of the disarray in offering accommodations to people with disabilities during the CT legislative process. Two letters have been written to the director of the Office of Legislative Management on February 14 and on March 20 which highlight the issues and offer solutions. The office response did not adequately address the issues, and in fact ongoing examples of discrimination have occurred since the first letter in February. Here is the response. (Note that hearings only have five days public notice so requiring ten days excluded people who are deaf) :

"We know there is always room for improvement and based on your letter we will be making changes to the process outlined in Americans with Disabilities Act section of our Bulletin.

Currently, the following statements can be found in the Bulletin under the Americans with Disabilities Act section:

- The Capitol and Legislative Office Buildings are administered in compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act. Requests for accommodation should be directed to Brian Pencz at (860) 240-0100.
- Hearing assistance devices are available for all hearing rooms and the House and Senate chambers. Sign language interpreters are available for access to the legislative process. Request should be directed to the

Committee Clerk or the Office of Legislative Management at (860) 240-0100. All requests for accommodation should be made at least 10 days in advance.

Committee clerks are typically the first point of contact for people attending public hearings and committee meetings. I want to emphasize that OLM, as identified in the Bulletin, is prepared and ready to assist at any point in the process. We have communicated with all committee clerks to remind them to contact our facilities team should they require additional assistance with accommodations.

Moving forward we will be removing the 10 day advanced request requirement for sign language interpreters as we have seen a change in recent years in the availability of interpreters. We contract with multiple, local agencies and have great success with providing those services as needed. We will ask that those requests be directed to OLM's main office number. "

I will be filing several other complaints.