



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

For science. For action. For health.

February 14, 2018

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write in opposition to H.R. 620, the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017. This legislation would create significant barriers to enforcing the right of people with disabilities to access public accommodations and commercial facilities -- including health care facilities -- under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

H.R. 620 upends key provisions of the ADA by delaying people with disabilities from the ability to enforce their rights to equal access to public facilities. Without this critical enforcement mechanism, compliance under the ADA will suffer and people with disabilities will be denied the access to which they are entitled to under the law. This legislation would eliminate incentives for businesses to proactively comply with ADA regulations, allowing businesses a significant period of time to correct barriers to access for people with disabilities.

Such a waiting period is particularly problematic in the context of healthcare: urgent healthcare needs must be addressed on a timely basis. If a person with a disability is denied the accommodations needed for quality care at the time care is needed, the damage to his or her health may be irrevocable. Furthermore, free resources are available to help businesses comply with the ADA. The federal government funds the ADA National Network which provides free technical assistance to businesses about their responsibilities under the ADA.

No other group protected by federal civil rights laws must provide written notices and endure lengthy waiting periods to enforce their rights to public accommodations. Undermining the enforcement of basic civil rights under the ADA will thwart the purpose of the ADA to improve the lives of Americans with disabilities.

H.R. 620 would detrimentally impact the rights of people with disabilities by denying them access to public accommodations. We ask you to oppose this legislation and any future effort to undermine the integrity of the ADA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director