



**Commission for Accessibility  
Meeting Minutes  
December 8, 2025  
Via Webinar**

**5:05 PM CALL TO ORDER**

In Attendance: Maureen Culhane, Debbie Prieger, Debra Francseshini, Divya Dorairajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota.

**N.B. There were two motions made during this session.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION I:** To approve CfA minutes from Nov 10, 2025

Motion by Debbie, Second by Debra  
**APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

**Commission for Accessibility  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, December 8, 2025**

**MOTION II:** To approve the schedule of 2026 CFA Meeting dates:

**2026 Meeting Dates:**

<b>Jan 12</b>	<b>Feb 9</b>	<b>March 9</b>
<b>April 13</b>	<b>May 11</b>	<b>June 8</b>
<b>July ---</b>	<b>Aug ---</b>	<b>Sept 14</b>
<b>Oct 19</b>	<b>Nov 9</b>	<b>Dec 7</b>

**Motion by Debbie, seconded by Divya  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY**

This meeting continues a program started last year in offering a compendium of topics discussed by the Commission during the present year. It is meant as an overview since the full topics can be referenced online and also helps to make accessible in a single place the wide range of topics covered by disability laws.

**January, 2025 5:00PM**

**Artificial Intelligence (AI)** is significantly enhancing education and accessibility for individuals with disabilities by providing personalized and inclusive learning experiences.

## **CONCLUSION**

In short, there have been extraordinary advances in recent years in the ability of AI systems to incorporate intentionality, intelligence, and adaptability in their algorithms. AI software learns as it goes along and incorporates real-world experience in its decision making. In this way, it enhances human performance and augments people's capabilities.

**February 10, 2025**

## **Robert's Rules of Order & ADA-Accessible Voting.**

**"Robert's Rules of Order"** was first published in 1876 by U.S. Army Brigadier General Henry Martyn Robert, who developed the rules after a frustrating experience leading a church meeting where he lacked knowledge of proper parliamentary procedure; he decided to codify the practices used in the U.S. House of Representatives to create a guide for regular organizations, ensuring fair participation and orderly discussion during meetings, with the goal of preventing chaos and allowing everyone a chance to be heard.

## **CfA – Voting procedure for Persons with Disabilities under the ADA and Robert's Rules of Order**

**March 10, 2025**

**Review of ADA Requirements for Local Governments.  
ADA Update: A Primer for State and Local Governments**

**Who is Protected by the ADA?**

**General Nondiscrimination Requirements**

**Reasonable Modification of Policies and Procedures**

**Communicating with People Who Have Disabilities**

**Reasonable Modification of Policies and Procedures**

**Communicating with People Who Have Disabilities**

**Staff Training**

**April 7, 2025**

**Guide to Disability Rights Laws**

**Americans with Disabilities Act  
(ADA)**

**ADA Title I: Employment**

**ADA Title II: State and Local Government Activities**

**ADA Title II: Public Transportation**

**ADA Title III: Public Accommodations**

**ADA Title IV: Telecommunications Relay Services**

**Telecommunications Act**

**Fair Housing Act**

**Air Carrier Access Act**

**Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act**

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Idea Act)**

**Rehabilitation Act**

**Architectural Barriers Act**

**May 12, 2025**

## **Mechanical Chemical Sensitivity – Public-Health Aspects**

### **Abstract**

Multiple Chemical Sensitivity (MCS) is a phenomenon which the ENT-doctor should be familiar with. It has its roots in the description of a syndrome in 1987. A worker spilled chemicals at his workplace and from then on he reacted highly sensitive to chemicals. Today, there are many people who explain their complaints with self-suspected MCS. Various pathophysiological models have been proposed, including toxicological, immunological or behavioral models. But no-one could be proved so far. Since controlled provocation tests have also provided unclear results, an increasing number of doctors assumes today, that MCS reflects a psychic condition. In 1996, an expert team of the WHO has suggested the renaming of MCS to "idiopathic environmental illness" (IEI). However, other doctors still assume a chemical cause. Since there are neither straightforward diagnostic methods to proof MCS, nor reliable therapeutic concepts, treatment of MCS-patients is usually difficult. The MCS-debate (somatic vs psychic causes) seems to reflect the dilemma of the medical profession today, that somatic disorders of known origin can be well treated, whereas the increasing number of psychosomatic/ somatoform disorders is often resistant to medical help. The ENT-doctor should pay attention to changes of the nasal mucous membrane, nasal resistance and the sense of smell. Moreover he should know about the peculiarities of MCS-patients. The manuscript describes the present knowledge and state of discussion with special regard to the situation in Germany.

**U.S. Agencies: ADA, HUD, OSHA (Enforcement varies)**

## Self-Identification for Persons with Disabilities

- **Self-diagnosis alone is insufficient:**

Courts have ruled that a self-diagnosis, without supporting medical documentation, is not enough to prove a disability under the ADA.

- **The ADA requires medical documentation:**

To establish a disability, individuals typically need to provide documentation from a medical professional confirming the condition and its impact on their ability to perform essential functions.

HOLDER INFO	<p><b>JOHN DOE</b></p> <p>33 Main Street, Anywhere NY 10001</p> <p>DOB: 1/10/2019</p> <p>Emergency Contact: <u>Jane Doe</u></p> <p>Phone: <u>518-123-4567</u></p> <p>Additional Information: <u>Non-verbal, does not make eye contact, does not like to be touched, is non-violent, likes to be called Johnny, Pica, uses a wheelchair</u></p> <p style="font-size: small;">This card is issued pursuant to Mental Hygiene Law section 13.43. It confers no rights to, nor establishes any eligibility for, developmental disability services. This card is to be used solely to assist the holder in interactions with law enforcement or emergency services personnel.</p>
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## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IDENTIFICATION CARD

### **I HAVE A DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY.**

I MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY UNDERSTANDING AND FOLLOWING YOUR DIRECTIONS OR MAY BECOME UNABLE TO RESPOND.

I MAY BECOME PHYSICALLY AGITATED IF YOU PROMPT ME VERBALLY OR TOUCH ME OR MOVE TOO CLOSE TO ME.

I AM NOT INTENTIONALLY REFUSING TO COOPERATE.

I MAY NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE.

PLEASE SEE THE BACK OF THIS CARD.

**June 9, 2025**

Meeting Via Zoom

**Memorial Day Parade**

**May 26,2025**

The Commission participated in this year's Memorial Day Parade, which begins on Main street between Jessie Lee Church and the Hawley House, and ends at Ballard Park. There were more than a thousand marchers comprising many town entities, local youth, non-profits and marching bands. Each member of the Commission participated in the march which included two convertible cars festooned with our new CfA banners! Thousands more lined the street and enthusiastically supported the marchers. As in the past, there was an Air Force fly-over at noon. We hope to make this an annual Commission event.

**Connecticut "Yellow Envelope Bill" (House Bill 7159)**

Connecticut [House Bill 7159](#), known as the "Yellow Envelope Bill," aims to improve communication and reduce misunderstandings between first responders and individuals with cognitive impairments or physical disabilities. The bill mandates the creation of yellow envelopes containing essential information to aid first responders during interactions. It also promotes training for first responders and public awareness materials to enhance communication.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

**September 8, 2025**

Meeting Via Zoom

In Attendance: Maureen Culhane, Debbie Prieger, Debra Franceschini, Divya Dorairajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota.

**ADA AND EMERGING LEGAL LANDSCAPE**

**GOAL: TO EXPLAIN HOW DISABILITY LAW IS ADAPTING TO AI CHALLENGES.**

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**2. Recent Federal Guidance**

Agencies are clarifying how existing disability laws apply to AI.

### 3. Section 508 & Rehabilitation Act Updates

Federal agencies and contractors are legally required to provide accessible technology, including AI systems.

### 4. Pending and Proposed Legislation

Lawmakers are considering **new rules** to regulate AI specifically.

### 5. Key Legal Takeaway

*The ADA is being stretched to cover modern technologies like AI, even though it was written in a pre-digital era.*

*Federal guidance and state-level rules are emerging, but enforcement depends on advocacy and awareness.*

**October 6, 2025**

## COMMISSION BUSINESS

The Commission discussed its intent to request a letter of commendation for a past member. A suggestion was made for the Commission to send letters to elected officials regarding topics of interest to persons with disabilities. It was agreed commissioners who wished to do so would submit such letters at a Commission meeting for discussion.

## Outline: ADA and Disability Law in a Time of Fiscal Uncertainty

### I. Introduction

### II. Legal Foundations

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### **III. Fiscal Pressures on Implementation**

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### **IV. Opportunities in Fiscal Constraint**

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### **V. Risk of Backsliding**

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### **VI. Strategies for Moving Forward**

- **Prioritization:** Identifying high-impact, low-cost accessibility measures.
- **Creative Compliance:** Phased approaches, leveraging digital solutions.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Consulting disability communities in decision-making.
- **Advocacy:** Protecting and expanding disability rights despite fiscal pressures.

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### **VII. Conclusion**

- **Balancing Act:** Fiscal uncertainty does not erase legal and moral obligations.
- **Future Outlook:** A chance to rethink sustainable, inclusive models of accessibility.
- **Call to Action:** Ensure disability rights remain central, not sidelined, in budget decisions.

**Monday, November 10, 2025**

Meeting Via Zoom

**COMMISSION BUSINESS:**

**The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Section 504**

This was the first major US federal law to prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

“No otherwise qualified individual with a disability...shall, solely by reason of their disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

N. B. Applied civil rights principles (like those of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) to people with disabilities.

Became a foundation for later laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

**Meeting Dates for 2026**

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Minutes by Don Ciota



**Commission for Accessibility  
Meeting Agenda  
Monday, December 8, 2025 5:00PM**

Via Zoom (access information below). Should someone need a special accommodation in order to participate in this meeting please contact Tony Phillips, Town ADA Coordinator at 203 807-4524.

**Policy: Commission for Accessibility meetings will be conducted under Roberts Rules of Order and all participants are expected to conduct themselves with dignity and treat all those present with respect, empathy and civility.**

Commission for Accessibility Chairman, Don Ciota, is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting hosted by Tony Philips, Town ADA Coordinator.

**FOR THE PUBLIC**  
You are invited to register for a Zoom webinar!

When: Dec 8, 2025 05:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)  
Topic: Commission for Accessibility 12/8/2025

Register in advance for this webinar:  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_tTpQhh7SaKsJsw7zzheww](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_tTpQhh7SaKsJsw7zzheww)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

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**5:00 PM. Call to Order**

## **Public Comments**

**Approval of Minutes:** November 10, 2025

## **Compendium of 2025 Commission Topics**

### **2026 Meeting Dates:**

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### **Adjourn**

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota