



**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 Dorairrajan, 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:

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

**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 behaviorial 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	JOHN DOE
	33 Main Street, Anywhere NY 10001
	DOB: 1/10/2019
	Emergency Contact: <u>Jane Doe</u>
	Phone: <u>518-123-4567</u>
	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>
<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.</small>	



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 began 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 Dorairrajan, Tony Phillips, Don Ciota.

ADA AND EMERGING LEGAL LANDSCAPE

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

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

III. Fiscal Pressures on Implementation

IV. Opportunities in Fiscal Constraint

V. Risk of Backsliding

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

Jan 12

Feb 9

March 9

April 13

May 11

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July ---

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Sept 14

Oct 19

Nov 9

Dec 7

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_tTpbQhh7SaKsJsw7zzhevW

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:

Jan 12

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Adjourn

Minutes prepared by Don Ciota