



e-Newsletter

Click on details of workplace rights, safety and health, and accessibility in the legislative branch:

Historic reforms made to the Congressional Accountability Act

YOUR RIGHTS in the Congressional Workplace

The Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) applies employment, labor, safety and health, and accessibility rights and protections to covered employees of the legislative branch, including unpaid staff.

The Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) administers a process to resolve claims alleging violations of these laws. *Confidential advising is available at no cost.*

- Unlawful Discrimination & Harassment**
Prohibits harassment and discrimination in personnel actions based on race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, or disability. (CAA SEC. 201)
- Retaliation**
Prohibits intimidation, reprisal, or discrimination against employees who exercise their rights under the CAA. (CAA SEC. 207)
- Fair Labor Standards**
Requires minimum wage and overtime compensation for nonexempt employees, restricts child labor, and prohibits sex-based wage differentials. (CAA SEC. 203)
- Family & Medical Leave**
Provides rights and protections for employees needing leave for specified family and medical reasons. (CAA SEC. 202)
- Genetic Information**
Prohibits the use of genetic information as a basis for personnel actions. (CAA SEC. 102)
- Veterans & Servicemembers**
Protects employees who are past or present members of the uniformed services from discrimination or retaliation and provides certain benefits and unemployment rights. (CAA SEC. 206)
- Mass Layoffs**
Requires that employees be notified of an office change or a mass layoff. (CAA SEC. 205)
- Polygraph Testing**
Restricts the use and the results of polygraph testing. (CAA SEC. 204)

The CAA also enhances access for eligible veterans to job opportunities and establishes a redress system if their veterans' preference rights are violated. (CAA SEC. 401)

A claim alleging violations of the above laws must be filed with the OCWR within **180 days** of the violation. If your claim passes a preliminary review by a hearing officer, you may request an administrative hearing or file a complaint in federal district court. If your claim does not pass the preliminary review, you still may file a complaint in federal district court. The OCWR offers, at no cost to covered employees, confidential advising services to provide information, guidance, and assistance with drafting claims. Mediation is also available upon request and agreement of the parties.

The OCWR also enforces the laws below. Contact us to learn more.

- Accessibility**
Members of the public who are qualified individuals with disabilities may not be denied access to public services, programs, activities, or places of public accommodation. (CAA SEC. 301)
- Collective Bargaining & Unionization**
Allows certain legislative branch employees the right to form, join, or assist a labor organization or to refrain from such activity. (CAA SEC. 208)
- Hazard-Free Workplaces**
Requires employing offices to comply with occupational safety and health standards and to provide workplaces free of recognized hazards. (CAA SEC. 101)

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All of the provisions of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (CAA) Reform Act are in effect as of June 19. The law extends protections to unpaid staff, requires training on workplace rights, and amends the process to resolve alleged violations of the Act.

YourRights@Work, the new publication of the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR), includes additional information about our:

- revised administrative dispute resolution process,
- updated procedural rules,
- new secure e-filing system, and
- enhanced access for out-of-area employees.

ICYMI: FAQs about the CAA Reform Act.

NOTICES required by the CAA Reform Act are being delivered beginning June 14. Additional copies are available in the House mailroom in Longworth B-240, Senate mailroom in Dirksen B-28, and at the OCWR in the Library's Adams Building, LA-200. The notices can also be downloaded from the OCWR website. Details about each of the workplace protections are also online.

New to the legislative branch?
Check out our Welcome brochure.

COMING SOON

Sign up for e-alerts: Don't miss Executive Director Susan Tsui Grundmann's video highlighting new elements of workplace protections for legislative branch employees.

FAST FACTS: Twenty seconds to a healthier workplace

Tips for every workplace
+ Office Safety Checklist for the 116th Congress



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