



Office of Congressional Workplace Rights

Biennial Report on Americans with Disabilities Act

Public Services and Accommodations

for the 117th Congress: A Preview

Spring 2023

About this report

Under the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (CAA), as amended, during each Congress, the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) of the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights (OCWR) is required to inspect the facilities of the covered entities in the legislative branch for compliance with the public services and accommodations provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The CAA requires the OGC to prepare and submit a report based on these inspections.

The report presented here is designed to give the public a preliminary look at the overall results from the inspections for the 117th Congress while a more detailed report is being developed. As a result, barrier counts and details contained within are subject to change.

The OGC provides detailed reports to legislative branch offices throughout the inspection period. Thus, the entities responsible for correcting these barriers have been notified about them.

OCWR OGC Accessibility Program

Under Section 210 of the CAA, 2 U.S.C. § 1331, the OGC enforces the public services and accommodations provisions found in Titles II and III of the ADA. These provisions mandate that public services and accommodations, including the facilities where these services are provided, be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The OGC has found that educating the legislative branch community about the accessibility requirements of the ADA is one of the most effective ways to improve access. We provide a range of resources to help employing offices learn about their obligations under the ADA. Our goal is to empower employing offices with the information they need to make their spaces accessible to individuals with disabilities. We conduct our biennial inspections of legislative

branch facilities and grounds on the Capitol Hill campus with that goal in mind. Our inspections help offices identify areas where improvement is needed and consider suggestions to improve accessibility.

To maximize resources, each biennial inspection focuses on specific facilities or grounds. Within each facility, we focus on the areas that are open to visiting members of the public, such as entrances/exits, restrooms, elevators, and interior routes.

Results

Barriers by Facility

During the 117th Congress, the OGC’s ADA inspections focused on:

- Thomas P. O’Neill, Jr. House Office Building;
- U.S. Botanic Garden;
- Capitol Grounds;
- Union Square;
- Library of Congress John Adams Building; and
- House and Senate Member offices and committee rooms.

Within these facilities, we identified 567 barriers to access. During this inspection, the Capitol Grounds had the highest number of barriers (194), followed by the O’Neill House Office Building (187), and the U.S. Botanic Garden (70).

Facility	Number of Barriers	Percentage of Total
Capitol Grounds	194	34.22%
Thomas P. O’Neill, Jr. House Office Building	187*	32.98%
U.S. Botanic Garden	70	12.35%
Union Square	39	6.88%
Cannon House Office Building	32	5.64%
Rayburn House Office Building	23	4.06%
Longworth House Office Building	18	3.17%

Library of Congress John Adams Building	2	0.35%
Dirksen Senate Office Building	1	0.18%
Russell Senate Office Building	1	0.18%
Grand Total	567	100.00%

* Includes one or more “whole facility” barriers. The “whole facility” designation is used when an issue is repeatedly identified across a substantial number of offices or locations in a single facility. Whole facility barriers are generally architectural in nature, such as doors into Member offices that do not meet ADA standards, and are issues that will need to be addressed as a whole by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) or the Chief Administrative Officer.

Barrier Categories

For identification purposes, we categorize the barriers into barrier types, which generally reflect the type of object found to be inaccessible or the area in the facility where we identified the barrier, such as in a restroom or an elevator lobby. In the 117th Congress, the most-identified barrier category was Multi-User Restroom. Nearly one third of the total barriers (178 out of 567) were identified in this category.

After Multi-User Restroom, the category with the next highest number of barriers was Exterior Route, with 135 barriers identified, nearly one quarter of the total. The Exterior Route category includes barriers such as excessive slopes, gaps, or changes in level that can pose a problem for mobility device users, and other barriers related to an exterior path of travel.

Barrier Category	Number of Barriers	Percentage of Total
Multi-User Restroom	178	31.39%
Exterior Route	135	23.81%
Curb Ramps	117	20.63%
Interior Route	80	14.11%
Doors	36*	6.35%
Signage	12	2.12%
Stairs	4	0.71%
Drinking Fountain	2	0.35%

Alarms	1*	0.18%
Business & Mercantile	1	0.18%
Elevator Lobby	1	0.18%
Grand Total	567	100.00%

* Includes one or more “whole facility” barriers.

Conclusion

The full Biennial Report on Americans with Disabilities Act Public Services and Accommodations for the 117th Congress will include more information about the facilities that were the focus of the inspections. The barriers found and updates on accessibility improvements made by the AOC and other offices will also be included.

We thank all the offices involved for their cooperation. We look forward to publishing the full Report.