**Disability Law** 

# **Disability Law**

## Cases, Materials, Problems

### SEVENTH EDITION

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*To my family* — Laura Rothstein

*To my expanding family* — Ann McGinley

To Glen, Nathan, and Ryan — D'Andra Shu

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# Preface

This book is intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the major laws relating to discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Before the late 1980s and early 1990s, few law schools had comprehensive courses on disability law, although some of the issues were covered in courses related to employment law and mental health law. The major topics not addressed in depth in this book relate primarily to entitlements and benefits, such as Social Security and workers' compensation. Also not covered are many of the issues relating to individuals with mental disabilities. While discrimination issues for that population are discussed, the topics related to competency, right to treatment, right to refuse treatment, and deinstitutionalization are not addressed to a great extent. These issues merit coverage in separate books and courses.

The book includes selected cases, problems, questions, hypotheticals, and statutory and regulatory references. The notes are designed to highlight additional cases of interest, while the problems, questions, and hypotheticals are intended to provoke thought about unresolved and complex issues. Although there may be case citations following some of the problems, it is essential to note that these may represent only one jurisdiction's view of the issue raised by the problem.

This new edition includes important updating and new materials designed to focus students on important issues in disability law. The primary focus is on the key statutes applicable to disability discrimination. These are the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (and the 2008 amendments – ADAAA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1975 – IDEA), and the Fair Housing Act Amendments (1988 – FHAA). Several other statutes are also important and discussed within appropriate chapters, particularly those related to employment, health care, and transportation. These statutes include the Family and Medical Leave Act (1993 – FMLA), the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (2008 – GINA), Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Affordable Care Act (2010 – ACA), the Architectural Barriers Act (1968 – ABA), the Air Carrier Access Act (1986 – ACAA), and 42 U.S.C. Section 1983.

The 7th edition continues features added in the 6th edition. First, in addition to the questions and notes following the case materials, each chapter has a number of hypothetical problems that are introduced at the beginning of the material to be studied. Students are encouraged to read the hypothetical problems and to consider the questions in the hypothetical problems as they read the material in the text. After studying the materials, students and faculty members should discuss the hypotheticals in order to ensure that the students have gained a working knowledge of the law and analysis. Chapter 2 deviates from this order by introducing numerous hypothetical problems near the end of the chapter as a review to assure that the introductory materials concerning coverage and defenses have been understood before moving on to the chapters that deal with specific areas of disability law.

Second, each chapter begins with an Introduction and Overview, Chapter Goals, and a list of Key Concepts and Definitions. Each chapter ends with a Summary. Students should read each of these sections first before returning to the beginning of the chapter to read it again.

The 7th edition also has information about many evolving issues that affect persons with disabilities. Most significant since the publication of the 6th edition in 2019 is the impact of the Covid epidemic on disability discrimination law. While Covid may have dissipated to a significant degree, it opened the door to complex discussions in areas such as accommodations relating to attendance, mandatory masking, mandatory vaccinations, and use of technology (and ensuring its accessibility). The deference to regulatory agencies has also come under question since the previous edition. Other issues of growing significance in recent years include internet and website issues, topics not contemplated at the time the ADA was originally enacted. In addition, animal accommodations in a wide range of settings raise new and complex issues sometimes requiring balancing of "competing" disabilities.

Chapter 1 provides context for the impact of disability on the lives of individuals and how federal nondiscrimination law provides a means to become a part of mainstream society.

Chapter 2 provides a broad overall introduction to the key statutory protections highlighting who is protected, what entities are subject to each statute, and substantively what is expected with respect to nondiscrimination and reasonable accommodation. A general introduction to defenses is also included. Discussion of particularly topical specific conditions includes obesity, allergies and sensitivities, and gender identity. Chapter 2 also highlights explanatory materials in the form of a table of statutes and their coverage and a list of historical developments in disability law.

Chapter 3 deals with employment discrimination and disabilities. The chapter reflects the broad coverage of several key statutes and includes an explanation of EEOC regulations and subregulatory guidance that lawyers may consult in considering how to advise their clients and a list of questions to ask when reading an employment disability discrimination case. This chapter also includes materials on Covid and its effect on the workplace, on associational discrimination, on the effect of the ADAAA on court interpretations of who has a disability, and on legal use of medical marijuana and how it affects employment status.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus primarily on Titles II and III of the ADA. Some areas (such as mass transit and air transportation) have significant elements subject

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to both Title II and Title III. The transportation materials in both chapters have improved organization. Both chapters address architectural barriers, and a new chart is included that summarizes the basic requirements under the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act for existing construction, new construction, and alterations and renovations.

Chapter 6 on higher education focuses primarily on student issues but also addresses the application of disability discrimination law to faculty issues. It recognizes the mental health concerns that have increased due to Covid, but which were always of concern on college campuses.

Chapter 7 deals with elementary and secondary education. In addition to introducing the key coverage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act and how these three statutes interrelate is included. Substantive protections in addition to procedural safeguards are introduced.

Chapter 8 on housing applies both Fair Housing Act and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to demonstrate how individuals with disabilities are protected against discrimination and are provided reasonable accommodations. Architectural design requirements and community living are also addressed. Animal accommodations in housing is discussed.

Chapter 9, the chapter on health care and insurance, discusses the Affordable Care Act's impact on health care for individuals with disabilities and explains the continuing attack on the statute's validity and operation. Chapter 9 also adds a discussion about reproductive rights issues for disabled people.

New to this edition is a Statutory Appendix in the book that includes the key features of the major statutes and references to the major corresponding regulations for the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Fair Housing Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act as well as other significant statutes, such as the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Air Carrier Access Act.

In an overview course on this topic, it is difficult to address in depth all the legal issues affecting individuals with disabilities. These materials focus on issues of rights and nondiscrimination in the areas of employment, governmental programs and services, public accommodations (by private providers), higher education, elementary and secondary education, housing, and health care. As is evident in reading the materials, some areas (such as education and employment) have an enormous body of case law. Others (such as housing and health care) have been more recently developing.

The importance of awareness of these issues has never been greater. With the 1990 passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (which affects almost all aspects of society), problems with access to health care, and the 2008 amendments to the ADA, it is critical that members of the legal profession, as well as many social service providers and educators, have a working knowledge of this important area of law.

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String citations and non-quote source citations have been omitted from cases without any note of their omission. Many of the cases are not the full opinion, and material has been omitted in many instances without notation within the case. Some material is not indented and blocked in the same format as the original. The reader should check the full case report when doing research in reliance on the decision.

Because disability law is an evolving area of law, it is essential that reliance on the precedents and materials in this book be followed up by research on the current status in each area.

> LAURA ROTHSTEIN ANN C. MCGINLEY D'ANDRA MILLSAP SHU January 2024

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