

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1881

To amend the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to restore the intent and protections of that Act, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 26, 2007

Mr. HARKIN (for himself and Mr. SPECTER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To amend the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to restore the intent and protections of that Act, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Americans with Dis-
5 abilities Act Restoration Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

8 (1) in enacting the Americans with Disabilities
9 Act of 1990, Congress intended that the Act “estab-

1 lish a clear and comprehensive prohibition of dis-
2 crimination on the basis of disability”, and provide
3 broad coverage and vigorous and effective remedies
4 without unnecessary and obstructive defenses;

5 (2) decisions and opinions of the Supreme
6 Court have unduly narrowed the broad scope of pro-
7 tection afforded by the Americans with Disabilities
8 Act of 1990, eliminating protection for a broad
9 range of individuals whom Congress intended to pro-
10 tect;

11 (3) in enacting the Americans with Disabilities
12 Act of 1990, Congress recognized that physical and
13 mental impairments are natural parts of the human
14 experience that in no way diminish a person’s right
15 to fully participate in all aspects of society, but Con-
16 gress also recognized that people with physical or
17 mental impairments having the talent, skills, abili-
18 ties, and desire to participate in society are fre-
19 quently precluded from doing so because of preju-
20 dice, antiquated attitudes, or the failure to remove
21 societal and institutional barriers;

22 (4)(A) Congress modeled the Americans with
23 Disabilities Act of 1990 definition of disability on
24 that of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
25 (referred to in this section as “section 504”), which

1 had, prior to the date of enactment of the Americans
2 with Disabilities Act of 1990, been construed broad-
3 ly to encompass both actual and perceived limita-
4 tions, and limitations imposed by society; and

5 (B) the broad conception of the definition con-
6 tained in section 504 had been underscored by the
7 Supreme Court’s statement in its decision in *School*
8 *Board of Nassau County v. Arline*, 480 U.S. 273
9 (1987), that the definition “acknowledged that soci-
10 ety’s myths and fears about disability and disease
11 are as handicapping as are the physical limitations
12 that flow from actual impairment”;

13 (5) in adopting, in the Americans with Disabil-
14 ities Act of 1990, the concept of disability expressed
15 in section 504, Congress understood that adverse ac-
16 tion based on a person’s physical or mental impair-
17 ment is often unrelated to the limitations caused by
18 the impairment itself;

19 (6) instead of following congressional expecta-
20 tions that the term “disability” would be interpreted
21 broadly in the Americans with Disabilities Act of
22 1990, the Supreme Court has ruled, in *Toyota*
23 *Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. v. Williams*,
24 534 U.S. 184 (2002), that the elements of the defi-
25 nition “need to be interpreted strictly to create a de-

1 manding standard for qualifying as disabled” and,
2 consistent with that view, has narrowed the applica-
3 tion of the definition in various ways; and

4 (7) contrary to explicit congressional intent ex-
5 pressed in the committee reports for the Americans
6 with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Supreme Court
7 has eliminated from the Act’s coverage individuals
8 who have mitigated the effects of their impairments
9 through the use of such measures as medication and
10 assistive devices.

11 (b) PURPOSE.—The purposes of this Act are—

12 (1) to effect the Americans with Disabilities Act
13 of 1990’s objectives of providing “a clear and com-
14 prehensive national mandate for the elimination of
15 discrimination” and “clear, strong, consistent, en-
16 forceable standards addressing discrimination” by
17 restoring the broad scope of protection available
18 under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990;

19 (2) to respond to certain decisions of the Su-
20 preme Court, including *Sutton v. United Air Lines,*
21 *Inc.*, 527 U.S. 471 (1999), *Murphy v. United Parcel*
22 *Service, Inc.*, 527 U.S. 516 (1999), *Albertson’s, Inc.*
23 *v. Kirkingburg*, 527 U.S. 555 (1999), and *Toyota*
24 *Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. v. Williams*,
25 534 U.S. 184 (2002), that have narrowed the class

1 of people who can invoke the protection from dis-
2 crimination that the Americans with Disabilities Act
3 of 1990 provides; and

4 (3) to reinstate the original congressional intent
5 regarding the definition of disability in the Ameri-
6 cans with Disabilities Act of 1990 by clarifying that
7 the protection of that Act is available for all individ-
8 uals who are—

9 (A) subjected to adverse treatment based
10 on an actual or perceived impairment, or a
11 record of impairment; or

12 (B) adversely affected—

13 (i) by prejudiced attitudes, such as
14 myths, fears, ignorance, or stereotypes con-
15 cerning disability or particular disabilities;
16 or

17 (ii) by the failure to remove societal
18 and institutional barriers, including com-
19 munication, transportation, and architec-
20 tural barriers, or the failure to provide rea-
21 sonable modifications to policies, practices,
22 and procedures, reasonable accommoda-
23 tions, and auxiliary aids and services.

1 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS IN AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT**
2 **OF 1990.**

3 Section 2(a) of the Americans with Disabilities Act
4 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101(a)) is amended—

5 (1) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the
6 following:

7 “(1)(A) physical and mental disabilities are nat-
8 ural parts of the human experience that in no way
9 diminish a person’s right to fully participate in all
10 aspects of society; and

11 “(B)(i) people with physical or mental disabil-
12 ities having the talent, skills, abilities, and desire to
13 participate in society are frequently precluded from
14 doing so because of discrimination; and

15 “(ii) other people who have a record of a dis-
16 ability or are regarded as having a disability have
17 also been subjected to discrimination;” and

18 (2) by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the
19 following:

20 “(7)(A) individuals with disabilities have been
21 subjected to a history of purposeful unequal treat-
22 ment, have had restrictions and limitations imposed
23 upon them because of their disabilities, and have
24 been relegated to positions of political powerlessness
25 in society; and

1 “(B) classifications and selection criteria that
2 exclude individuals with disabilities should be strong-
3 ly disfavored, subjected to skeptical and meticulous
4 examination, and permitted only for highly compel-
5 ling reasons, and never on the basis of prejudice,
6 myths, irrational fears, ignorance, or stereotypes
7 about disability;”.

8 **SEC. 4. DISABILITY DEFINED.**

9 Section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of
10 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102) is amended—

11 (1) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the
12 following:

13 “(2) DISABILITY.—

14 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘disability’
15 means—

16 “(i) a physical or mental impairment;

17 “(ii) a record of a physical or mental
18 impairment; or

19 “(iii) being regarded as having a
20 physical or mental impairment.

21 “(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—

22 “(i) DETERMINATION OF IMPAIR-
23 MENT.—The determination of whether an
24 individual has a physical or mental impair-
25 ment shall be made without regard to—

1 “(I) whether the individual uses
2 a mitigating measure;

3 “(II) the impact of any miti-
4 gating measures the individual may or
5 may not be using;

6 “(III) whether any manifestation
7 of the impairment is episodic; or

8 “(IV) whether the impairment is
9 in remission or latent.

10 “(ii) MITIGATING MEASURES.—The
11 term ‘mitigating measure’ means any
12 treatment, medication, device, or other
13 measure used to eliminate, mitigate, or
14 compensate for the effect of an impair-
15 ment, and includes prescription and other
16 medications, personal aids and devices (in-
17 cluding assistive technology devices and
18 services), reasonable accommodations, and
19 auxiliary aids and services.”; and

20 (2) by redesignating paragraph (3) as para-
21 graph (7) and inserting after paragraph (2) the fol-
22 lowing:

23 “(3) MENTAL IMPAIRMENT.—The term ‘men-
24 tal’, used with respect to an impairment, means any
25 mental or psychological disorder such as mental re-

1 tardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or
2 mental illness, or specific learning disability.

3 “(4) PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT.—The term ‘phys-
4 ical’, used with respect to an impairment, means any
5 physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic dis-
6 figurement, or anatomical loss affecting 1 or more of
7 the following body systems:

8 “(A) Neurological.

9 “(B) Musculoskeletal.

10 “(C) Special sense organs.

11 “(D) Respiratory, including speech organs.

12 “(E) Cardiovascular.

13 “(F) Reproductive.

14 “(G) Digestive.

15 “(H) Genitourinary.

16 “(I) Hemic and lymphatic.

17 “(J) Skin.

18 “(K) Endocrine.

19 “(5) RECORD OF A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL IM-
20 PAIRMENT.—The term ‘record of a physical or men-
21 tal impairment’ means a history of, or a
22 misclassification as having, a physical or mental im-
23 pairment.

24 “(6) REGARDED AS HAVING A PHYSICAL OR
25 MENTAL IMPAIRMENT.—The term ‘regarded as hav-

1 ing a physical or mental impairment’ means per-
2 ceived or treated as having a physical or mental im-
3 pairment, whether or not the individual involved has
4 an impairment.”.

5 **SEC. 5. ADVERSE ACTION.**

6 The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is
7 amended by inserting after section 3 (42 U.S.C. 12102)
8 the following:

9 **“SEC. 4. ADVERSE ACTION.**

10 “An adverse action taken by an entity covered under
11 this Act against an individual because of that individual’s
12 use of a mitigating measure or because of a side effect
13 or other consequence of the use of such a measure shall
14 constitute discrimination under this Act.”.

15 **SEC. 6. DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY.**

16 Section 102 of the Americans with Disabilities Act
17 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12112) is amended—

18 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “against a
19 qualified individual with a disability because of the
20 disability of such individual” and inserting “against
21 an individual on the basis of disability”; and

22 (2) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding
23 paragraph (1), by striking the term “discriminate”
24 and inserting “discriminate against an individual on
25 the basis of disability”.

1 **SEC. 7. QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL.**

2 Section 103(a) of the Americans with Disabilities Act
3 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 2113(a)) is amended by striking “that
4 an alleged” and inserting “that—

5 “(1) the individual alleging discrimination
6 under this title is not a qualified individual with a
7 disability; or

8 “(2) an alleged”.

9 **SEC. 8. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

10 Section 501 of the Americans with Disabilities Act
11 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12201) is amended by adding at the
12 end the following:

13 “(e) BROAD CONSTRUCTION.—In order to ensure
14 that this Act achieves the purpose of providing a com-
15 prehensive prohibition of discrimination on the basis of
16 disability and to advance the remedial purpose of this Act,
17 the provisions of this Act shall be broadly construed.

18 “(f) REGULATIONS.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
20 after the date of enactment of the Americans with
21 Disabilities Act Restoration Act of 2007—

22 “(A) the Attorney General, the Equal Em-
23 ployment Opportunity Commission, and the
24 Secretary of Transportation shall issue regula-
25 tions described in sections 106, 204, 223, 229,
26 244, and 306, as appropriate, including regula-

1 tions that implement sections 3 and 4, to carry
2 out the corresponding provisions of this Act, as
3 this Act is amended by the Americans with Dis-
4 abilities Act Restoration Act of 2007; and

5 “(B) the Architectural and Transportation
6 Barriers Compliance Board shall issue supple-
7 mentary guidelines described in section 504, to
8 supplement the existing Minimum Guidelines
9 and Requirements for Accessible Design for
10 purposes of titles II and III of this Act, as this
11 Act is amended by the Americans with Disabil-
12 ities Act Restoration Act of 2007.

13 “(2) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sub-
14 section shall be construed to limit the authority of
15 an officer or agency described in paragraph (1) to
16 issue regulations or guidelines under any other pro-
17 vision of this Act, other than this subsection.

18 “(g) DEFERENCE TO REGULATIONS AND GUID-
19 ANCE.—Duly issued Federal regulations and guidance for
20 the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act
21 of 1990, including provisions implementing and inter-
22 preting the definition of disability, shall be entitled to def-
23 erence by administrative agencies or officers, and courts,
24 deciding an issue in any action brought under this Act.”.

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