

<< TESTIMONY ON SB2146 >>

Carel Two- Eagle, PK

Good morning Senate GVA Committee. For the record, my name is Carel Two-Eagle. I am before you today in support of S 2146.

I am the culprit behind the 2019 Session's HB 1298 and the new entrance to the Capitol building, which is now much more handicapped-friendly than it was previously. But the Capitol still does not even meet the requirements of the 1999 ADA update, let alone the 2010 update. This is unconscionable & unacceptable.

I am NOT "disabled". I am handicapped or physically impaired or challenged. Disabled speaks to all the things one can no longer do. It is negative in its focus & emphasis. Handicapped, impaired or challenged speak to all the things one can STILL do, so is far more positive.

The Americans with Disabilities Act – the ADA – has no wiggle room in its wording, when it states, "All state and local entities will accommodate persons covered by the ADA". It states "all" & "will", not maybe or sometimes or if an entity wants to accommodate. In fact, it is a felony to refuse to accommodate, with 10 years behind the iron door for "failure or refusal to accommodate". The law has teeth, as it should.

I now live on crutches. I have bone spurs around my left hip and on the outside of my spine. I can stand without aid, but I cannot walk without aid. If I slip, I will fall. There is no "maybe". If I fall, I cannot get up without a 5-gallon bucket or a suitable chair to balance against as I plank to rise. Or, if there are 2 men strong enough to help me stand as if they were standing a plank on its end.. Past that, we're talking about some kind of crane. There's a real dearth of those last 2, especially right when I need them. I'm certainly not going to go around carrying a 5-gallon bucket in case I fall!

But traveling on crutches is sometimes dicey. Smooth surfaces can be very hazardous – we who live on canes and crutches spend every second scanning the footing ahead. "Is that shiny spot ahead a function of the light or is it a wet / greasy spot? Or a bit of plastic or ...?"

I head a 501c3 170c2. My original secretary lived with a walker and an oxygen concentrator. She had to stop & sit every 40-50 feet to gasp for breath. There are no seats in much of the Capitol, thus her need for a walker. But what a hardship for anyone who just runs out of steam from the effort of getting around in this gorgeous building. Pain is debilitating, take my word for it.

Deaf people need visual aids and visually-impaired people need audio aids, since many do not learn Braille.

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The bathrooms throughout the building are a story in themselves. In 2019 I evaluated the entire building. The bathrooms in the Tower are exceptionally heavy, even for someone on a cane or crutches who is still pretty strong and athletic (considering). There are only a handful of door openers in the Judicial wing, and none in the Tower. If a handicapped person gets into a bathroom there, they have to wrestle a heavy door open, prop it open, & then get through. Someone in a wheelchair is supposed to grab a strap, pull the door open while backing the wheelchair, prop it open, & go through. Worse, the doorways will no accommodate a manual wheelchair, so they definitely won't accommodate a power chair. OR, such people must get someone to go to the bathroom with them! How demeaning!

SB 2146 and its companion HB 1030 NEED passage NOW. I cannot urge you strongly enough to recommend DO Pass on SB 2146.

Thank you for hearing me in a good way now. I am always available to answer any questions.