

Belmont Human Rights Commission Statement on the Anniversary of the Passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

This year marks the 32th anniversary of the passage of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. Having become law in 1990, the ADA ensures that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It was amended in 2008, changing the definition of discrimination against persons with disability can be effectively challenged in court.

Passage of the ADA is the result of years of advocacy efforts by a broad coalition of these diverse disability advocacy groups. Organizations such as the American Foundation for the Blind, the Epilepsy Foundation of America, National Association of the Deaf, National Mental Health Association, and many others united to support a broad definition of disability in the act and strongly opposed any attempts to exclude particular groups from coverage. It is an amazing feat that disability advocacy groups with competing needs and agendas were able to maintain unity over two decades to ensure passage of the ADA with a broad and inclusive definition of disabilities.

prejudices and structural discrimination against persons with disabilities are still common. Society as a whole has a lot of work to do to improve the life of persons with disabilities. The Belmont Human Rights Commission encourages Belmont community members to support the civil rights of persons with disabilities both in the community and in the workplace. Together, we build an equitable and inclusive society for all.

The Belmont Human Rights Commission is dedicated to fighting discrimination in all forms and increasing visibility and awareness of issues regarding diversity and discrimination in our community. If you have experienced discrimination in Belmont, please contact us at belmont.hrc@gmail.com or call 617-993-2795.