

## The Americans with Disabilities Act Turns 30, but Obstacles Remain

It was a sunshiny day in Washington D.C. on July 26, 1990 when then President George H. W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act in a White House Rose Garden ceremony. As the *Smithsonian Magazine* noted: "That day, the United States became the first country to pass comprehensive protections for the basic civil rights of people with disabilities, outlawing discrimination against individuals with disabilities in schools, employment, transportation, and other key parts of public life. The ADA would also remake the physical environment of the country by mandating accessibility in public spaces—entry ramps, Braille on signs,

automatic doors, curb cuts and lifts on city buses and other measures that make it easier for the more than 61 million Americans living with disabilities to participate fully in society."

At the bill-signing ceremony for this watershed legislation, President Bush hailed the ADA as "the end to the unjustified segregation and exclusion of persons with disabilities from the mainstream of American life." Yet, three decades later significant barriers still exist for Americans with disabilities.

**Employment Gap.** The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, education, transportation and any place that is open to the general public. The law put disability on an equal footing with race, color, sex, and other classes that are protected from discrimination.

Still, fewer than 20% of adults with disabilities were employed in 2019, compared with 66% of those without a disability. Even after adjusting for age (people with disabilities are more likely to be older) there is still an employment gap. The ADA requires employers to provide "reasonable accommodations" to employees with disabilities provided those accommodations don't create "undue hardship." But the harsh reality is that during times of high unemployment when the pool of job seekers is large, employers are less inclined to make accommodations for disabled job applicants. This is a particular concern during these times when the COVID-19



July 26, 1990 - President George H. W. Bush signs into law the Americans with Disabilities Act.

pandemic has put the brakes on the economy and unemployment is at its highest level since the Great Depression.

**Stereotypes Persist.** "There are a vast amount of stereotypes that keep companies from hiring," April Allen, program director at My Possibilities, a nonprofit organization in Plano, Texas, which serves adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, told baptistnews.com. Businesses "think that the accommodations [for disabled employees] will be too expensive — but they're really an average of about \$500." Additionally, Allen said, "many employers have preconceived notions that disabled people can't learn or won't be able to do the job well or at all. But the reality is far different. It has been proved that for the adults we place in jobs the turnover is so low," she said. "They are so enthusiastic about having a job. They're loyal and they stay there. For many, it's their first paycheck." As a society we still have work to do to break down the biases that lead to discrimination.

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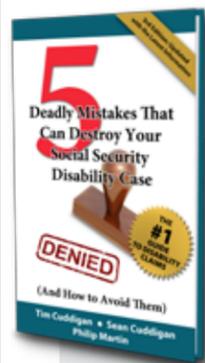
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ADA Turns 30...cont.

**Transportation and Technology Inequalities.** Without a doubt the Americans with Disabilities Act has improved how disabled people can get around. Better sidewalks, crosswalks that make noise and flash, kneeling buses, more ramps and elevators all have advanced the mobility of disabled Americans.

However, more needs to be done. For example, air travel is not covered by the ADA and, according to advocates for the disabled, over the past three decades it has become worse for disabled people. This is “particularly [true] when it comes to getting motorized wheelchairs in and out of cargo pits”, says Judy Huemann, a disability rights activist. “Technology companies, too, often lag behind in providing accessibility measures for users with disabilities—contributing to what’s known as the ‘digital divide,’” she says.

Part of the reason why many of the hoped for outcomes of the ADA have not come to pass is because enforcement of the ADA, in many cases, hinges on an individual or group successfully suing for compliance. The mechanism for actually implementing the ADA, in many respects, is the process of somebody with a disability filing a complaint about the lack of accessibility,” explains Beth Ziebarth, who directs Access Smithsonian, the branch of the Smithsonian Institution that works to make its museums, zoo and research centers accessible to all. “That leads to spotty compliance across the country.”



**“5 Deadly Mistakes That Can Destroy Your Social Security Disability Case” is the #1 guide to improving the odds of winning a disability case.**

**For a FREE copy for you or someone you care about call Cuddigan Law at 402.933.5318 or email us at [lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com](mailto:lawteam@cuddiganlaw.com)**

## The Most Popular VA Benefits in Nebraska and Iowa

Individual U.S. states offer veterans a wide range of benefits. Here are the most popular veteran benefits in Nebraska and Iowa. (For a list of the most popular benefits in all 50 states go to: <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/76439/veterans-benefits-2020-popular-state-benefit/>)

### Nebraska

“The Nebraska Veterans Registry is the most popular benefit based on the fact that out of the 125,000 Veterans in Nebraska 85,000 plus are registered with the State of Nebraska. This allows for easy application for benefits provided such as military license plates and special discounts sometimes offered at establishments throughout the state,” according to John Hilgert, Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs Director. Veterans can apply to the registry at [https://www.nebraska.gov/va\\_registry/index.cgi](https://www.nebraska.gov/va_registry/index.cgi).

### Iowa

“Our Homeownership Assistance Program that provides \$5,000 for first time Veteran homebuyers, our Veterans License Plates – which contributes to our License Plate Fund, and our Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License programs are all among our most popular programs, says Karl J. Lettow, an Iowa Veterans Affairs Information Specialist. Details on these benefits are at <https://va.iowa.gov/benefits>.



## Comfort Food

From the kitchen of Janet Cuddigan

### Ice Cream in a Bag

Here’s a delicious way to make fresh strawberry ice cream and no ice cream maker is needed.

- 1 cup half and half
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup raw strawberries
- 4 cups ice
- ¼ cup coarse kosher salt

Combine the half and half, sugar, vanilla, and strawberries in a quart size resealable plastic bag. Press the air out of the bag, seal, and shake bag to combine contents. Place the bag into a gallon sized zip top bag. Add the ice to the gallon bag, press the air out, and seal bag. Wrap bags in a hand towel. Shake continuously, until the contents of the small bag thickens into soft-serve ice cream, 5 to 10 minutes. Rinse the small bag quickly under cold water to wash off salt. Lay the ice cream filled baggie on a flat surface. Use a wooden spoon handle to push the ice cream down to the bottom corner of the baggie. Snip off the corner, and squeeze ice cream into a bowl and enjoy!

Adapted from [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

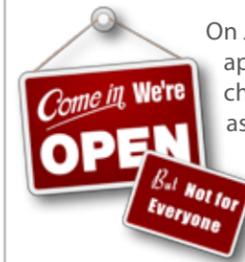
## Social Security Offices Are Open, but Not for Everyone

The more than 1,200 Social Security Administration (SSA) field and local offices have been shuttered since March due to the pandemic. The vast majority of SSA employees have been teleworking from home.

Local SSA offices are accepting in-person visitors to their local offices only by appointment and only in “dire need” situations. In general SSA says a dire need exists when:

- You do not have food or the means to obtain it; or
- You are unable to obtain medical care or medication, or you have restricted access to medical care because of a lack of resources; or
- You lack shelter or necessary utilities.

If you believe you need to speak with a Social Security representative face-to-face, you can’t just drop in. Call your local office first.



On July 20th, the SSA issued guidelines you must follow if you have an appointment at a SSA office, you must complete a self-assessment checklist before you will be allowed to enter. If you meet the self-assessment requirements you must wear a face covering over your mouth and nose to enter the facility. If you do not have a mask, SSA will provide you with one. If you are unable to wear a face covering, call the office and ask to speak with the manager.

## Drop Quote



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Your task is to “drop” each of the letters into the appropriate square in each column, until the entire quote is revealed.

For the drop quote solution go to [cuddiganlaw.com/library/newsletter](http://cuddiganlaw.com/library/newsletter)  
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**Are you a disabled veteran?**

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