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35 Years Since the ADA, Colorado Disability Advocates Say: ‘We’re Still Fighting’

Denver, CO — As the nation marks **the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** this Saturday, July 26, Disability Law Colorado (DLC) is calling attention to both the landmark law’s enduring impact and the persistent challenges facing disabled Coloradans today.

Signed into law in 1990, the ADA prohibits discrimination based on disability in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and other key areas of public life. Colorado has played a central role in the national disability rights movement, from the activism of ADAPT in Denver in the 1970s to more recent legislative gains at the state level.

“We celebrate what the ADA has made possible, but 35 years later, we also recognize how many systemic barriers still remain,” said **Gentrice Petrie**, Advocacy Specialist for DLC. “Too often, people think of the ADA as the finish line, but it was just the start. People with disabilities and advocates still fight every day to hold the system accountable.” Petrie, an expert historian of the disability rights and independent living movements in Denver, also facilitated the disability rights oral history project housed at History Colorado.

“The ADA laid the foundation, but it did not build the house,” said **David Ortiz**, former Colorado State Representative and current DLC Board Member. “We are still fighting for access, especially in areas like health care, housing, education, and representation. If we don’t stay vigilant, the progress we’ve made can be rolled back.” Ortiz, the first wheelchair user elected to the Colorado legislature, championed accessible housing, health equity, and disability inclusion during his time in office.

As federal budget debates approach this fall, Disability Law Colorado urges policymakers and the public to treat this anniversary not only as a celebration but as a reminder of the ongoing work required to uphold and expand the civil rights of people with disabilities.

Journalists seeking background or comment related to the ADA anniversary or disability rights are encouraged to contact **Communications Manager Felix Ortiz** to schedule an interview with David Ortiz and Gentrice Petrie through the end of July.

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***Disability Law Colorado** is a nonprofit civil rights organization, authorized by federal law to combat discrimination, abuse, and neglect. We aim to make Colorado the best place in America for people with disabilities to thrive. For more information, visit disabilitylawco.org.*