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Disability Law Colorado Secures Stronger Protections for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Incarcerated People

Amended agreement with CDOC establishes oversight mechanisms to ensure settlement compliance

[Denver, CO | February 6, 2025] After nearly a year of negotiations, Disability Law Colorado (DLC) has secured a significant legal victory for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals incarcerated in the **Colorado Department of Corrections (CDOC)**. DLC and CDOC reached an amended settlement agreement that was approved by the court on **Jan. 25, 2025**. The amended agreement reinforces CDOC's obligations to provide equal access and accommodations, and critically, establishes an independent Monitoring and Training Team to ensure compliance with the agreement.

"This agreement is a huge step forward in ensuring that the rights of Deaf and hard of hearing people are more than just words on paper," said **Kassidy Roberts, Staff Attorney at Disability Law Colorado**. "With this new oversight, we can help make sure that CDOC follows through on its commitments and that individuals in custody receive the accommodations they are legally entitled to."

The case, which began in 2019, exposed systemic failures in CDOC's treatment of Deaf and hard of hearing people, including a lack of sign language interpreters, inadequate access to alarms and notifications, and failure to provide and maintain hearing aids. The parties reached the original settlement agreement in August 2022, but unfortunately, less than a year later, reports surfaced that CDOC was not complying with the terms. After nearly a year of dispute resolution, the parties reached this new amended agreement that strengthens enforcement, ensuring that CDOC follows through.

The Monitoring and Training Team, a key addition to the agreement, includes **Howard Rosenblum, a prominent Deaf attorney and Chair of Deaf Equality**, and **former U.S. Magistrate Judge Kristen Mix**. Their role will be to oversee CDOC's implementation of the required accommodations.

This success was made possible through a collaborative legal effort, including student attorneys at **the University of Denver's Civil Rights Clinic (CRC)**, **Amy Robertson from Fox & Robertson**, and DLC's legal team, including Kassidy Roberts. For further information or to request an interview, contact **Felix Ortiz at 720-202-9871 or FOrtiz@DisabilityLawCO.org**.

About Disability Law Colorado: 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 to live and work with a disability.

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Press Contact:

Felix Ortiz

Communications Manager

Disability Law Colorado

Email: fortiz@DisabilityLawCO.org

Phone: 720-202-9871