



Missouri Proclamation of Equal Rights for People with Disabilities*

PREAMBLE

We declare that regardless of ability, all persons are whole human beings and should have opportunities to grow and develop to their full potential. The level of a person's intelligence, mobility, sight, hearing, communication or expression, and need for support does not confirm or negate their status as a whole human being. Thus, the human and civil rights of people of all abilities must be honored, protected, communicated, and enforced so that all have freedom and power to direct their own lives with determination and dignity through the exercise of meaningful choice.

Section I: WE BELIEVE and AFFIRM that all human beings, regardless of ability, have the basic right to live free from abuse, neglect, isolation, and exploitation in their homes, jobs, schools and communities. As such:

1. People must not have to tolerate physical, mental, financial, emotional or sexual exploitation, bullying or abuse. People deserve freedom from situations or systems where these issues have become commonplace or are ignored.
2. People's money and resources must be safe, secure, and under their control and/or direction.
3. People must be free from discrimination, whether based on hate, fear, pity or good intentions. Discrimination is determined by the effect an action has on a person's life, whether the intent of the action was to discriminate or not.
4. People must be free from attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions communicated by others, which diminish their self-worth and standing in society.

Section II: WE BELIEVE and AFFIRM that all people, regardless of ability, have the right to live free from the oppression of:

1. Systems that isolate people from the community, whether in rural or urban settings.
2. Supports that control them and their environment, or fail to recognize that they are in charge of their own lives.
3. The fear that they will be denied treatment or services, abandoned, or left to die, because the circumstances of their existence are deemed too costly, too difficult, or simply not important.
4. End-of-life decisions and advance directives made without their consent.

* Originally based on the *Washington Proclamation for the Dignity and Rights of All Human Beings*

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5. Placement in situations and institutions, regardless of location, that isolate, control, and segregate them, including housing, employment, and education that does not support autonomy and community life.
 6. Labels that separate, devalue, or dehumanize people.
 7. Systems that impose or deny services without meaningful participation by those affected by the services.
 8. Parents, guardians, professionals, or others who make decisions that ignore or disregard the decisions or preferences of people with disabilities, compromising their wishes, perspectives, and input in the process, thereby altering their self-determined course as human beings.
 9. Medical discrimination that devalues them through:
 - a. Laws, policies, and practices that assume certain people do not deserve medical treatment to improve or sustain their lives.
 - b. Medical decisions that deny or force medical treatment without the affected person's involvement and consent, because it is presumed they do not understand or know what is best for themselves.
 - c. Medical treatment that alters or controls people for the convenience of others, society, or any system, without their explicit consent.

Section III: WE BELIEVE and AFFIRM that all people, regardless of ability, have the freedom to lead a meaningful life, in which:

1. People are presumed to be competent.
2. Each person has his or her own name and identity and is acknowledged as a unique individual.
3. People have the right to develop intellectually, sexually, physically, spiritually, and socially to their full potential, without pressure to alter how they speak, feel, think, or move.
4. People exercise the right to choose their relationships: the people with whom they spend their time, share personal details, or are intimate.
5. People are the primary drivers of their own life choices and decisions, and their right to make decisions for themselves, with or without assistance, is respected, encouraged, and supported.
6. People have the right to make choices that may result in failure. Risk is acceptable, even when it results in a person not being successful. The outcomes of people's choices should not affect their value as human beings.
7. People have the right to learn, grow, and have equal access to inclusive education that prepares them to enter the working world and participate fully in their communities. We reject the notion that people are on predetermined paths because they have a disability.

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8. People have the right to learn and grow through the pursuit of life-long learning opportunities.
 9. People are inspired by high expectations from others, helping them strive to become all they can be. Limited expectations restrict people's growth, advance stereotypes, and lead to labeled incompetence and poverty, instead of self-determined lives.
 10. People pursue careers that provide economic stability and freedom, where they can be promoted, form positive work relationships, and receive employment supports that increase their autonomy.
 11. People control and/or direct their own finances, consistent with their personal ambitions and responsibilities.
 12. People have access to technology, including assistive technology, which increases their ability to access information and interact as equal participants in their communities.

When all of the above are recognized, honored, and practiced, then we as a society will:

1. Presume competence and uphold high expectations.
2. Promote the health and well-being of all people.
3. Support people to fully, meaningfully, and productively participate in civic, cultural, political, economic, and social life, regardless of communication style, mobility, race, nation of origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, intelligence, accommodations, strengths, independence, support needs, and ability.
4. Support and never abandon those who struggle and seek assistance, no matter how difficult.
5. Promote respect for each other, even in conflict.

**To register your support for the Missouri Proclamation of
Equal Rights for People with Disabilities, please visit:**

[SurveyMonkey.com/r/SupportMODisabilityRightsProclamation](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SupportMODisabilityRightsProclamation)

Participating Organizations

Representatives of the following organizations participated in all or part of the development of the rights statement. Group and individual feedback was solicited through the entirety of the process, including multiple versions of the statement. Their participation does not imply they agree with everything in the Proclamation at this time.

Arc of the United States, Missouri chapter

Governor's Council on Disability (GCD)

Heartland Self-Advocacy Resource Network (HSRN)

Missouri Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MOAIDD)

Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services (MACDDS)

Missouri Association of People Supporting Employment Now (MO-APSE)

Missouri Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF)

Missouri Department of Mental Health – Division of Developmental Disabilities (DMH)

Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council (MODDC)

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services (MO P&A)

Missouri TASH

People First of Missouri (PFMO)

Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE)

Services for Independent Living (SIL)

University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Institute for Human Development (IHD)

UMKC IHD Consumer Advisory Leadership Team (CALT)