

NASW-TX SOGIE Committee Statement on the Lawsuit to End Section 504 Protections

The NASW-TX SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) Committee strongly condemns the ongoing legal efforts to dismantle Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This lawsuit is an affront to the core values of social work. Eliminating these protections would cause direct and devastating harm to some of the most vulnerable communities we serve. These are the [17 States suing to end Section 504 protections](#): Texas, Alaska, Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, and West Virginia.

Section 504 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. It ensures that people with disabilities have equal access to education, employment, healthcare, and other essential services by requiring reasonable accommodations and protections against exclusion or unfair treatment.


This lawsuit was initially framed as a battle against accommodations for gender dysphoria, despite the fact that Section 504 does not currently cover gender dysphoria. The use of anti-trans narratives has now escalated into a broader attack on disability rights and civil rights protections as a whole. If this lawsuit succeeds, it would strip away critical protections and set a dangerous precedent. Disability and ableism are being weaponized, particularly against communities that are already marginalized. This is a continuation of this country's history of prejudice and discrimination against the disability community.

Take action now! With arguments due from both parties on February 25th, we urge all social workers, allies, and community advocates to take the following steps:

1. Contact Your Legislators – Call your Federal AND State Senators and Representatives to demand they publicly oppose this lawsuit and work to strengthen, not weaken, disability rights and civil rights protections. Find out who represents you here: https://ballotpedia.org/Who_represents_me
2. Contact your State Attorney General – In Texas, our State Attorney General is Ken Paxton. You can call the main switchboard: 512-463-2100. If you are in another state, you can find your State AG here: https://ballotpedia.org/Who_represents_me
3. Mobilize Your Networks – Share information about this case on social media, in community meetings, and within professional networks to raise awareness and encourage collective action.
4. Engage in Direct Advocacy – Join or support advocacy organizations actively working to defend Section 504, such as the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), the ACLU, and LGBTQ+ legal advocacy groups.
5. Educate and Empower Clients – Ensure that those affected by this potential rollback understand their rights and know where to seek legal assistance if necessary.

Social workers are called to advocate for justice and equity. We cannot allow this attack on civil rights to go unchallenged. We must act swiftly to defend the fundamental rights and dignity of every person.

In solidarity,


Ashley Heidebrecht, LMSW
Chair, NASW-TX SOGIE Committee