



December 29, 2021

In February of 2021 Colorado HB21-1014 was introduced by Colorado State Representatives Dafna Michaelson Jenet and Mark Baisley, and was carried in the Senate by Colorado State Senator Jessie Danielson.

HB21-1014 proposed a symbol be added to identification documents (such as a driver's license or state identification card), to alert law enforcement officers and other first responders that additional assistance may be required during the interaction.

This legislation was based on the belief that individuals with autism, those in the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing community, as well as individuals with an invisible disability, are at a higher risk of experiencing adverse encounters with first responders.

Supporters of the bill claimed that the resulting encounter would be more likely to have a positive outcome for the individual and first responders involved if an easily-identifiable symbol was used on identification documents.

Proponents of HB21-1014 reported adding an identifying symbol to the identification documents of People with Disabilities (PWD) would help de-escalate a conflict or potentially violent situation by providing context for the officer.

Individuals within the disability community, including many in the Independent Living community, did not support HB21-1014.

The data used to support the notion that a disproportionate number of adverse outcomes for PWD was garnered from a white paper written for journalists to increase their knowledge of how to report on PWD. It reported that up to 50% of individuals who have adverse outcomes with peace officers have a disability, while acknowledging the statistic may not be accurate, as officers are not taking data on this identifier.

The disability community has fought for decades for every individual's right to autonomy, which HB21-1014 directly contradicts. Loss of privacy and potential civil rights implications are just a few of the potential unintended consequences of this bill. The disclosure of disability status is a privacy issue and one that should be left to the individual.

With the passing of HB21-1014, members of the disability community are now actively engaged in supporting the adoption of an appropriate symbol that will serve the intention of the bill and allow for privacy, to the extent that it is possible.



The current proposed symbol is trademarked by the Invisible Disabilities Association (IDA) and is not universally recognized. The lack of recognition only serves to drive traffic to the company's website where an IDA identification card may be purchased for \$20.

Currently three states (Missouri, Alaska and Delaware), have different disability identifiers on state identification cards (a wheelchair, the letter "I" and an emergency medical symbol, respectively).

The emergency medical symbol is universally recognized and can aid in communicating an individual's potential issues and if additional assistance is required to effectively interact with a law enforcement officer or first responder.

The intent of HB21-1014 is to increase positive interactions between PWD and first responders and the emergency medical symbol will best accomplish that goal. Peace officers are familiar with this symbol and understand that it indicates the individual has a condition that requires attention.

The Independence Center is the local home of civil rights for people with disabilities. Working with individuals, their families, and the community, we create independence so that all may thrive. Unlike an assisted living center, our organization provides information, resources, and support to help people with disabilities live, learn, work, play, and participate in civic life as equals.

The Independence Center strongly recommends that the medical emergency symbol be used on - drivers' licenses and identification cards to indicate to police officers a need for disability/medical assistance.



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Yeager".

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CEO Emeritus