

Mobility at a Standstill: Improving flawed transportation and accessibility in the US

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Abstract

While it might be commonly accepted that one's mobility should not be purposefully hindered, true mobility demands obligations from the government, property owners, and regional organizations that extend beyond merely recognizing or enforcing accessibility guidelines. A wide variety of physical and mental conditions can greatly hinder a person's mobility. These limitations on mobility can jeopardize a person's ability to work, travel, and access food. This can often lead to poverty, increased risk of disease, and many other negative impacts on someone's livelihood and sense of belonging. Despite the dangers of immobility, there is a striking lack of discussion in United States disability legislature, even in documents such as the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 or the rule titled Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel. To better understand and identify this trend, phrases, sentences, and word associations in ten central pieces of United States federal disability and accessibility legislation were analyzed from a statistical perspective. Federal legislation—as well as city and regional programs—tends to provide specific rules for accessibility to transportation or buildings, but fails to provide a cohesive, enforceable way of ensuring mobility in entire neighborhoods and cities. This paper focuses on the problems that an individual can face if they are unable to mobilize themselves, the importance of viewing mobility as a positive right, where current local and federal legislation in the United States falls short of guaranteeing mobility, and some recommendations for changing laws and programs in order to facilitate mobility for everyone. By presenting

on my findings and research into the importance of mobility, I hope to motivate others to regard mobility as necessary and fundamental to ensuring positive health outcomes and guaranteeing that people—regardless of any mental or physical impairments or diseases—have the ability to advocate for themselves and become even more integrated in society.

Keywords: Disability, Transportation, Mobility, Legislation

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