

Timeline

National Disability Employment Awareness Month each October recognizes the societal and workforce contributions of people with disabilities. Congress designated in 1945 the first “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week”; the word “physically” was removed in 1962 to allow for the inclusion of all Americans with disabilities. In 1988, the week was extended to a month and its name changed to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.”

1753 Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia is first hospital with ward to treat mental illness

1773 Virginia establishes first hospital solely for treatment of “idiots, lunatics and other people of unsound mind,” the Public Hospital for Persons of Insane and Disordered Mind, now Eastern State Hospital

1776 Stephen Hopkins, who has cerebral palsy, signs the Declaration of Independence, saying, “My hands tremble, but my heart does not”

1805 Dr. Benjamin Rush, considered the father of American psychiatry, publishes *Medical Inquiries and Observations Upon the Diseases of the Mind*

1817 American School for the Deaf opens in Connecticut. American Sign Language originates here

1829 Louis Braille publishes his eponymous raised-dot alphabet

1832 Perkins School for the Blind opens in Massachusetts

1841 Activist Dorothea Dix begins her crusade on behalf of mentally ill people, leading to the first state-run mental hospitals

1860 British physician William Little first identifies cerebral palsy

1866 British physician John Langdon Down publishes first description of Down syndrome

1869 First wheelchair patent is issued in United States

1880 National Association for the Deaf is founded

1907 Indiana becomes the first state to pass a eugenics law to sterilize “confirmed idiots, imbeciles and rapists” in state institutions. Similar laws are adopted by 31 other states

1918 Soldiers Rehabilitation Act provides job training for returning World War I veterans with disabilities

1924 Helen Keller graduates from Radcliffe College, becoming the first deaf blind person to earn a bachelor’s degree

1927 In *Buck v. Bell*, Supreme Court rules forced sterilization of people with disabilities is not a violation of 14th Amendment

1933 Franklin Roosevelt, who is paralyzed from the waist down by polio, becomes President. Accounts differ as to the extent he went to hide his disability

1935 Social Security Act provides funds to each state to assist, among others, the blind and “crippled” children

1943 Dr. Leo Kanner becomes first person to clearly define autism

1949 United Cerebral Palsy is founded

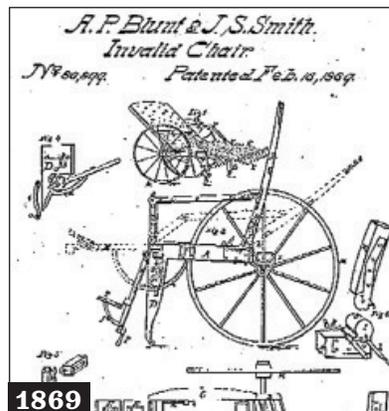
1956 Disability Insurance program is added to Social Security

1960 First Paralympic Games held in Rome

1961 *Making Buildings Accessible to and Usable by the Physically Handicapped* is published. Forty-nine states adopt accessibility legislation by 1973

1962 Eunice Kennedy Shriver starts a day camp that becomes Special Olympics

1962 Ed Roberts, who has polio, enrolls at the University of California, Berkeley. He is considered the father of the Independent Living movement



- 1964** Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity or national origin, but does not include disability

- 1965** Medicaid program is established to cover healthcare costs for people with disabilities

- 1965** Autism Society of America is founded

- 1970** Judy Heumann successfully sues the New York City Board of Education when her application for a teaching license is denied because her wheelchair is deemed a fire hazard

- 1973** Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits public institutions that receive any federal funds to discriminate on the basis of disability

- 1975** Education for All Handicapped Children Act requires public schools that accept federal funding to provide equal access to education for children with disabilities

- 1976** Amendment to Higher Education Act of 1972 mandates services for college students with physical disabilities

- 1978** National Council on Disability is founded in Department of Education

- 1981** United Nations declares 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons

- 1984** Voting Accessibility for Elderly and Handicapped Act requires polling places to be accessible to people with disabilities for federal elections

- 1990** President Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which guarantees access to and prohibits discrimination against individuals with “physical or mental disabilities”

- 1992** United Nations establishes Dec. 3 as International Day of Disabled Persons. In 2007 the name is changed to International Day of

Persons With Disabilities

- 1998** Federal judge rules that golfer Casey Martin, who has a circulatory disorder, may use a cart to compete on the PGA Tour

- 2000** President Clinton signs Executive Order 13163, calling for federal government to hire 100,000 people with disabilities over next five years. Few steps are taken to implement the order, forcing President Obama to sign another executive order in 2010 requiring compliance

- 2001** Congress creates the Office of Disability Employment Policy in Department of Labor

- 2004** Chicago hosts first Disability Pride Parade

- 2008** ADA Amendments Act grants broader protections to workers with disabilities

- 2009** Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act prohibits employers from using genetic information to discriminate against employees or job applicants

- 2011** Revised ADA regulations adopt 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and address other accessibility issues, including accommodating service animals as well as wheelchairs and other mobility devices

- 2014** Employment of people with disabilities by the U.S. federal government hits record high, representing 13.56 of total federal workforce for permanent employees

- 2017** The Billion Dollar Roundtable votes to expand criteria of diverse businesses to include Disability-Owned Business Enterprises (DOBEs)

- 2017** “Sesame Street” introduces Julia, a Muppet who has autism, to television



1964



1965



2000

Sources: *ABILITY Magazine*, disabilityhistoryweek.org, National Consortium on Leadership and Disability for Youth, *The New York Times*, nps.gov, Temple University, whitehouse.gov