

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Happy 31st to the ADA – The US is Ableist AF

Liggera Edmonds-Allen · Tuesday, July 27th, 2021

Happy Disability Pride Month! July 26th 2021 marks the 31st anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities act, also known as the ADA.

When thinking about disability in America, able-bodied neurotypicals seem to have the bizarre belief that this is some ancient history that is all taken care of. They get annoyed by wheelchair lifts on buses, leap out of the way of white canes, and avoid the cashier with a speech impediment. But by the letter of the law, the whole ableism thing isn't a problem anymore – that fight was won!

Sadly, the fight for disabled rights is far from over. We have recently been seeing more discussions of intersectionality, marriage laws, and pay inequity. When disabled people bring up everyday injustices in their lives, able-bodied people appear shocked. I'm here to give you some of the most ridiculous, bullshit ableist things in America today. Hopefully you'll be inspired to Google or follow some awesome people on Instagram. Either way, here's just a taste of ableist garbage mountain.

1. The Whole Marriage Thing

This month, you may have seen some pastel Instagram infographics about [marriage inequality](#). But the gays are good, so what gives?

Marriage is still very much unequal in America, and it all comes down to what every able bodied person loves to talk about: benefits. Disabled people still have to choose between their SSI/Medicaid and their partner. When a couple gets married, their assets are considered combined. If the total is too high, then a person can be considered ineligible for necessary assistance. Disabled people applying for SSI/Medicaid can be denied if they are married, and lose personal care necessary for their daily life.

2. The Whole Income Thing

Disabled people in America cannot have more than [\\$2,000 in assets](#). Read that again, please. Disabled people *cannot* have more than *\$2,000 in assets, or they will lose their support*. And assets means everything: cash, checkings, savings, and personal effects. Once again, this comes down to SSI and benefits. When you are disabled, it is ridiculously hard to accumulate wealth of any kind, especially not generational wealth for any of your kids.

3. “Readily Achievable” Structures

But one thing we can all agree on is that we have the ramps. To have spaces that are inaccessible to disabled persons isn’t something that happens anymore. Right?

Absolutely wrong! There are several grey areas within the ADA, and places that simply refuse to become ADA-Compliant. For example, a structure might be considered fully ADA compliant, with all primary function areas accessible. But guess what – bathrooms and hallways aren’t considered primary function areas! Mind boggling, right? To take it even further, one can simply say that making such accommodations is not “readily achievable,” and pretty much will be okay. If the linked article doesn’t make you absolutely lose your shit, I may not be the columnist for you.

4. The Impossibility of Public Life

Sometimes, able bodied people think that there aren’t any disabled people in their community. After all, [they don’t see them anywhere](#), unless they’re staring at a wheelchair. They don’t see them at jobs ([because they are regularly screened out](#)) or concerts ([because public venues don’t care too much](#)) or even on the street ([because ableist architecture is still commonplace](#)).

When you are disabled, it seems you stop being a person. You aren’t a part of your town, or your state, or your country – you’re just a burden reduced to a list of accommodations. Whenever you exist, people want to know your [inspirational story](#), or forget all rules of social etiquette out of fascination. Compound that with your race, gender identity, and sexuality, and it becomes impossible to exist in ‘normal’ spaces.

I want to leave you with this – disabled people are people with dreams, careers, and aspirations. [Disabled theatre makers](#) still can’t get into most venues, and are pretty sick of you shitting on digital theatre. [Disabled models](#) are still rocking the fashion world. Disabled writers, photographers, poets, and painters are everywhere, along with disabled [accountants](#), [physicists](#), and [mathematicians](#). Some disability activists say that the only barrier that exists for disabled people is their environment. America *seriously* needs to get rocking, because disabled people are the coolest in the world.

This entry was posted on Tuesday, July 27th, 2021 at 6:44 am and is filed under [Politics](#), [Social Action](#), [Identity](#)

You can follow any responses to this entry through the [Comments \(RSS\)](#) feed. You can leave a response, or [trackback](#) from your own site.