

Wheelchair users sue Baltimore over 'widespread' violations of federal accessibility requirements

by Kaelan Deese, Breaking News Reporter | | June 12, 2021 10:00 AM

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Three wheelchair users filed a class-action lawsuit against Baltimore, [Maryland](#), alleging "widespread" violations of federal accessibility requirements by the city, such as failing to install and maintain curb ramps and sidewalks.

"The issue is failure over time to bring sidewalks and curb ramps around [Baltimore City](#) into compliance with the Americans with Disability Act requirements," said Rebecca Rodgers, a senior staff attorney for the New York-based Disability Rights Advocates group.

They filed their [complaint](#) in the District Court of Maryland on June 10 in conjunction with the IMAGE Center, a 501c3 nonprofit group dedicated to "new thinking about disability." The three plaintiffs affected by the alleged lack of ADA-required accessibility points across the city are Susan Goodlaxson, Janice Jackson, and

Keyonna Mayo.

The *Washington Examiner* reached out to representatives for the city of Baltimore for comment on the lawsuit but did not immediately receive a response.

The city of Baltimore conducted a survey in 2019 of its curb ramps across the city and found only about [1.3% of the 37,806](#) ramps examined were in ADA compliance, Rodgers told the *Washington Examiner*.

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Rodgers claimed the problem has gotten worse over time because the city has not taken steps to bring ramps and sidewalks into compliance with the federal ADA requirements [passed in 1990](#).

She said census data show thousands of more disabled residents could be struggling from a lack of proper accessibility [infrastructure](#) around the Baltimore area.

"According to census data from 2017, more than 50,000 Baltimore residents have mobility disabilities," Rodgers told the *Washington Examiner*.

[U.S. Census data](#) from 2015 to 2019 show 11.9% of city residents under the age of 65 years have at least one disability, meaning as many as 70,000 residents could be suffering from a condition that affects their day-to-day life.

"Accessible curb ramps and sidewalks are necessary to achieving the integration and equal opportunity mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other disability nondiscrimination laws,"

[said Linda Dardarian](#), a partner at Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho.

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Rodgers said the plaintiffs are not seeking monetary damages. Rather, they want their lawsuit to result in the city implementing "comprehensive construction and remediation of curb ramps and sidewalks."

"We are in this to get the city of Baltimore to implement a plan to make sure that their pedestrian rights of way are accessible going forward," Rodgers said.