



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Federal Judge Certifies Class Action Alleging that the City of Long Beach Fails to Make its Sidewalks Safe for Wheelchair Users**

**Long Beach, CA** –Federal Judge Dale S. Fischer issued an order today certifying a class in the ongoing case against the City of Long Beach and its Mayor regarding their failure to address pervasive access barriers for wheelchair users throughout the City’s sidewalks and pedestrian routes.

These barriers include: a lack of curb cuts at intersections, uplifted and cracked sections of sidewalk, steep and hazardous slopes, and sidewalks blocked by poles and other obstacles. As a result of these pervasive barriers, people with mobility disabilities are restricted in their ability to travel to work, restaurants, medical appointments, and to visit with family and friends. In particular, wheelchair users are frequently forced to travel in the street in order to avoid barriers, putting themselves at severe risk of injury.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit include residents and visitors to the City of Long Beach who are prevented from traveling safely and independently throughout the City due to the City’s failure to fix access barriers on its pedestrian routes. The plaintiffs are represented by non-profit legal centers Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) and Disability Rights Advocates (DRA), and by Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian, and Ho, a plaintiffs’ public interest class-action law firm specializing in civil rights litigation.

Plaintiff Ben Rockwell, who uses a power wheelchair and observed the September 14 hearing on class certification, said “I have lived in Long Beach for almost thirty years and am thrilled that the unsafe sidewalk conditions throughout the City will finally be addressed, not just for myself but for everyone.”

“This ruling is a significant victory for residents and visitors of Long Beach” said Kara Janssen, Staff Attorney at Disability Rights Legal Center, “it will allow us to ensure that people with disabilities in Long Beach are able to be a full part of their community and have equal access to something as fundamental as the City’s sidewalks and pedestrian paths.”

Zoe Chernicoff, an attorney at Disability Rights Advocates, added, “this ruling is a significant step forward for this case, and in light of its impact, we hope that the City will work with us to reach a resolution that results in a City-wide overhaul to make sidewalks accessible for all.”

### **About Disability Rights Legal Center**

The mission of Disability Rights Legal Center (DRLC) is to champion the rights of people with disabilities through education, advocacy, and litigation. DRLC maintains specialized programs that focus on areas of pressing concern to the disability community. Our client base includes people with all types of disabilities; people affected by cancer; children and students with disabilities; medically fragile children and people with terminal illness.

[www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.com](http://www.disabilityrightslegalcenter.com)

### **About Disability Rights Advocates**

Disability Rights Advocates is one of the leading nonprofit disability rights legal centers in the nation. With offices in Berkeley and New York City, DRA's mission is to advance equal rights and opportunities for people with all types of disabilities nationwide.

[www.drlegal.org](http://www.drlegal.org)

### **About Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian and Ho**

Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho is one of the oldest and most successful plaintiffs' public interest class action law firms in the country. GBDH represents individuals against large companies and governmental entities in complex, class and collective action lawsuits in the firm's three primary practice areas: employment discrimination, wage and hour violations, and disability access, as well as in other public interest areas. The firm is located in Oakland, California and has a national practice, litigating cases in federal and state courts throughout the country. To read more about GBDH visit: <http://qbdhlegal.com/>