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## For Immediate Release

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## People With Mobility Disabilities File Class Action Lawsuit Against City of Los Angeles Over Inaccessible Parks and Park Facilities

*The City's Parks Exclude Wheelchair Users by Not Meeting Federal and State Access Laws*

**July 26, 2024 – Los Angeles, CA** – Thirty-four years after the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and four years before the Los Angeles Olympics, three people with mobility disabilities and a non-profit serving persons with disabilities in Los Angeles filed a federal class action lawsuit against the City of Los Angeles for denying them full and equal access to the City's newly constructed and renovated public park facilities, a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and California law. The City's construction and alterations of its parks make it difficult or impossible to obtain the health benefits and social support of this important community asset for Plaintiffs Judy Griffin, Olivia Almalel, R.S. and Communities Actively Living Independent and Free ("CALIF"), and all other persons with mobility disabilities. [Read the complaint.](#)

Not being able to safely access their neighborhood parks and popular parks and facilities is the reality for the plaintiffs and all other persons with mobility disabilities. Olivia Almalel said,

Carrie Madden, Systems Change Advocate at CALIF, added, "We would love to visit Griffith Park and other parks near our home and work. We do not want to risk our safety in order to visit the beautiful parks our City has to offer."

The City's parks and park facilities have multiple, pervasive, and hazardous physical access barriers including dangerous and inaccessible pedestrian pathways within City parks, inaccessible entrances and exits, inaccessible restrooms, inaccessible public buildings, inaccessible paths of travel within City parks, inaccessible athletic fields, inaccessible picnic areas, inaccessible playgrounds, and inaccessible or nonexistent parking for people with mobility disabilities. Among other things, the lawsuit seeks an order to ensure that Los Angeles's park facilities comply with laws and standards that have been in place for decades.

Plaintiffs are represented by:

- Disability Rights Advocates
- Goldstein, Borgen, Dardarian & Ho
- Law Office of Paula Pearlman
- Schneider Wallace Cottrell Konecky LLP

Paula Pearlman said, “Navigating the parks in Los Angeles is dangerous instead of enjoyable. Despite renovations and investment in parks, many pathways are cracked and crumbled, restrooms are problematic, and ramps are steep, hazardous and lead to stairs. People with disabilities cannot access the parks in our City on an equal basis as non-disabled people.”

Jinny Kim, Supervising Attorney at Disability Rights Advocates, said, “The accessibility of a city’s park and recreation system goes to the heart and purpose of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other disability rights laws. On the anniversary of the ADA, we are still fighting for access to open, public spaces that should have been done decades before.”

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**Disability Rights Advocates** is the leading national nonprofit disability rights legal center. DRA’s mission is to advance the rights, inclusion, and equity of people with disabilities nationwide through high-impact litigation, education, and advocacy. DRA represents people with all types of disabilities in complex, system-changing class action cases and has previously negotiated systemic improvements to California’s State Park System and the Golden Gate National Recreational Area. For more information, visit <https://dralegal.org/>.

**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 other entities in complex class and collective action lawsuits. The firm has three primary practice areas: employment discrimination, wage and hour violations, and disability access, and also brings other public interest cases, including voting rights, environmental protection, and consumer cases. The firm has a national practice, litigating cases in federal and state courts throughout the country. For more information, visit <https://gbdhlegal.com/>

**Law Office of Paula Pearlman** is a law practice based in Los Angeles focusing on discrimination litigation, monitoring, and acting as an expert witness with a particular focus in disability rights. Ms. Pearlman is the former Executive Director of the Disability Rights Legal Center at Loyola Law School and former Assistant Chief Counsel at the California Civil Rights Department (previously DFEH).

**Schneider Wallace Cottrell Konecky LLP** is a national litigation law firm founded in 1993 that handles complex legal claims. SWCK represents classes of individuals, businesses, institutions, and individuals in jurisdictions nationwide and focuses on disability access class actions, mass tort, and other complex commercial cases. For more information, visit <https://www.schneiderwallace.com/>