



Californians for Olmstead
OUR Homes NOT Nursing Homes

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CUTS TO DISABILITY SERVICES IN CA COMMUNITY COLLEGES PUT EQUAL EDUCATION AT RISK

- We are receiving alarming reports that students with disabilities in the California Community College system are experiencing long delays and reductions in accommodations that they require and are entitled to in order to access an equal opportunity for an education.
- As you know, the fundamental right to equal education for people with disabilities is guaranteed under both federal and state law (*Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Section 11135 of the California Government Code*). Budget difficulties do not relieve the state or the community college system from the responsibility to provide reasonable accommodations.
- The California Association for Postsecondary Disability and Education has reported that while the rest of the community college system has experienced average cuts of 2.5%, *system-wide disability services have been cut by 40.55%*.
- The Association has also mounted a survey of the community colleges that documents cuts in services, including mobility assistance, alternative formats, sign language interpreting, assistive computer lab, special courses and other essential accommodations. Delays in assessment and access to service counselors are putting off access to accommodations for up to 7 weeks, causing current students to fall behind or drop out of school due to lack of appropriate accommodations.
- We believe that these deep and disproportionate cuts in disability services in the California Community College system are denying students the right to an equal education and are in violation of state and federal law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act. Denying the opportunity to pursue an education and a career fundamentally limits the independence of individuals with disabilities, and their ability to live in the most integrated setting, which is at odds with the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court's Olmstead decision.
- The urgency of this matter is paramount. The academic careers of students with disabilities are at risk right now because many of the community colleges are choosing to treat the enforcement of state and federal equal access laws as a discretionary decision.