

The logo for Disability Rights Oregon (DRO) consists of the letters "DRO" in a bold, teal, sans-serif font.

Disability
Rights
Oregon

The logo for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Oregon features the word "ACLU" in a large, bold, blue, sans-serif font, with "Oregon" in a smaller, red, sans-serif font below it.The logo for FACT Oregon features a colorful illustration of a family (a woman, a man, and two children) above the text "FACT Oregon" in a green, sans-serif font. Below this, the tagline "Empowering families experiencing disability." is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.The logo for the Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition (OSAC) features a red speech bubble icon to the left of the letters "OSAC" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below "OSAC" is the text "Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition" in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

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COVID-19: Advocates Ask Gov. Brown to Protect the Health, Safety, and Independence of 950,000 Oregonians with Disabilities

SALEM, Ore. — In a [letter to Gov. Kate Brown](#) and other state officials yesterday evening, advocates with Disability Rights Oregon, the ACLU of Oregon, FACT Oregon, and the Oregon Self Advocacy Coalition asked the state to take action to meet the needs of Oregonians with disabilities, who are among those at greatest risk during the current public health crisis. The groups sent detailed recommendations to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to care and the supports they need to be healthy, safe, and independent.

“The rights of people with disabilities are at risk in ordinary times. During this extraordinary crisis, people with disabilities are among those at greatest risk. As Governor Brown responds to this challenge that hasn’t been seen in our lifetimes, we ask her to ensure people with disabilities don’t face discrimination, have access to the supports they need to be healthy, and don’t lose the freedom and independence that many of us fought so hard to win,” said Jake Cornett, executive director of Disability Rights Oregon.

[READ THE FULL LETTER](#)

The advocates say they have been closely monitoring the state’s response to COVID-19, but fractured information sharing has made it difficult to stay up-to-date about what is occurring, including if the state has already implemented any of these recommendations.

The groups asked Gov. Brown to:

- **Direct and remind health care providers that, under federal civil rights law, they cannot discriminate based on age or disability when deciding who gets care and who does not.**
- **Include people with disabilities in response.** Direct local government bodies and department heads to include people with disabilities and disability experts at all levels of government planning and response to address the needs of individuals with disabilities in the planning process.
- Increase funding for home care workers, personal support workers, and direct support professionals that thousands of Oregonians rely on.
- Direct the Oregon Health Authority to halt all terminations of Oregon Health Plan eligibility and increase community health funding and services.
- Increase transparency of prisons in jails, with regular public updates about their response to COVID-19.
- Direct the Oregon State Hospital to increase free video and telephone calls, release or conditionally release high-risk patients, and inform all high risk patients about the process for requesting conditional release.
- Increase access to information through accessible forms of communication, including ASL interpreters, telephone and text messaging, accessible web pages, and accessible language for diverse audiences.
- Call on local governments to end all ticketing, arrests, and vehicle impoundments for violations stemming from people living in their car.
- Prohibit encampment sweeps and encourage increased access to individual housing units.
- Direct the Oregon Department of Education to ensure online education is equally accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and to offer accommodations and modifications for students receiving special education.
- And much more.

The letter is online at <https://aclu-or.org/en/press-releases/covid-19-advocates-ask-gov-brown-protect-rights-oregonians-disabilities>.

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