

The Honorable Andrew Bailey
Missouri Attorney General's Office
Supreme Court Building
207 W. High Street
PO Box 899
Jefferson City, MO 65102\

Dear Attorney General Bailey

In September 2024, Missouri, along with 16 other states, filed a lawsuit against the US government challenging Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This lawsuit, known as Texas v. Becerra, questions the constitutionality of Section 504, which prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs receiving federal financial assistance.

During a recent Missouri House Budget Committee hearing, when questioned by Rep. Kathy Steinhoff, you indicated a lack of awareness regarding this lawsuit.

I am writing to you as a licensed occupational therapy professional deeply committed to the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities. I respectfully urge your office to reconsider its participation in the lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (*Texas vs. Becerra*). This landmark legislation has been a cornerstone of disability rights for nearly five decades, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal access to education, employment, and public services.

As an occupational therapy professional, I have witnessed firsthand the transformative impact of Section 504 on the lives of my clients. This law has empowered individuals with disabilities to participate fully in society, free from discrimination and barriers. It has also provided a legal framework for ensuring that institutions receiving federal funding uphold the principles of equity and inclusion. Challenging the constitutionality of Section 504 threatens to undermine these critical protections and could have devastating consequences for millions of Americans who rely on this law to live with dignity and independence.

Section 504 is not only a legal mandate but also a moral imperative. It reflects our nation's commitment to justice, equality, and the inherent worth of every individual. By withdrawing from this lawsuit, your office would send a powerful message that the rights of individuals with disabilities must be safeguarded and that discrimination in any form is unacceptable.

I understand the complexities of legal challenges and the importance of addressing constitutional concerns. However, I urge you to consider the broader implications of this lawsuit on the disability community and the precedent it could set for future civil rights protections. Instead of challenging Section 504, I encourage your office to work collaboratively with stakeholders to strengthen and uphold the rights of individuals with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and to provide any additional information that may assist your office in making this decision. Please feel free to contact me at [your phone number] or [your email address].

Sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Your Title]

[Your Occupational Therapy License Number]

[Your Organization/Affiliation, if applicable]