



**For Immediate Release:**

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**QUEENS BOROUGH PUBLIC LIBRARY SUED FOR EXCLUDING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES FROM FULL AND EQUAL ACCESS TO HUNTERS POINT LIBRARY**

*Disability Rights Advocates calls out shocking disregard for community, seeks to force library to fix this unjust and discriminatory situation*

**NEW YORK (DATE, 2019)** – Today, Disability Rights Advocates (DRA) filed a class action lawsuit against Queens Borough Public Library, Board of Trustees of Queens Borough Public Library, and the City of New York, challenging the inaccessibility of Queens’ newest library branch, Hunters Point Library.

Plaintiffs Tanya Jackson and Center for Independence of the Disabled – New York (CIDNY) are suing to require the library to fix this unjust and discriminatory situation.

Under longstanding disability rights laws, newly constructed buildings must be made fully accessible to people with disabilities. Yet Hunters Point Library, which is an entirely new \$41.5 million building constructed after years of in-depth planning, shockingly excludes persons with mobility disabilities from full and equal access to its services through reliance on stairs and other inaccessible features.

The barriers at Hunters Point Library are numerous:

- There are at least three levels completely inaccessible to persons with mobility disabilities.
- The children’s section contains multi-level wooden lounging and small-group meeting space inaccessible to children and caregivers with mobility disabilities.
- The upper level of the rooftop terrace—which provides with spectacular views of Manhattan’s East River—has no access for persons with mobility disabilities.
- There are long waits for the heavily-utilized single elevator, which does not even stop at every level.

- The stunning panoramic views are most visible from inaccessible staircases.
- The designated stroller “parking” areas block the path of travel from the elevator to some of the Library’s main features.

“It is shocking to me that a brand-new public library would not be fully accessible to people with mobility disabilities like myself. Libraries should welcome everyone, not exclude whole populations of people,” said Tanya Jackson, a plaintiff who resides in Long Island City.

“Twenty-nine years after the ADA promised open doors and equal opportunities for people with disabilities, we find the doors of a brand new library shut to children and adults with disabilities. This should not be allowed to happen. Queens Borough Public Library and the City of New York must obey the law and make this right,” said Susan M. Dooha, Executive Director of plaintiff Center for Independence of the Disabled – New York.

“The ADA is not a new requirement, and it is not hard to understand. It is baffling that this \$41.5 million building is missing these fundamental elements. It’s as though the library didn’t care about these requirements, or worse didn’t even consider the needs of these members of the community. People with disabilities should be able to browse, relax, and enjoy the library just like everyone else,” said Andrea Kozak-Oxnard, a Staff Attorney at DRA.

“Hunters Point Library was meant to be a model, a state-of-the-art institution designed to serve the needs of the community. The Library’s total disregard for adults and children with disabilities must be addressed,” said Michelle Caiola, Managing Director of Litigation at DRA.

DRA’s goal is that the lawsuit will rectify the exclusion of people with disabilities by requiring Defendants to develop and implement a remedial plan to provide equal access to Hunters Point Library. The suit alleges violations of the federal and local civil rights laws designed to eliminate disability-based discrimination.

DRA provides free legal services and takes on complex class-action cases for people with disabilities whose civil rights have been violated. It is the leading nonprofit disability rights legal center in the country and has won nearly all its cases, knocking down barriers for people with all types of disabilities. Rather than delivering monetary rewards, these class-action suits are brought to force reforms to systems and practices that discriminate against people with disabilities.

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**About Disability Rights Advocates:** With offices in New York and California, Disability Rights Advocates is the leading nonprofit disability rights legal center in the nation. Its mission is to advance equal rights and opportunity for people with all types of disabilities nationwide. DRA represents people with all types of disabilities in complex, system-changing, class action cases.

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