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## ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

### *Bill Updates Accessibility Guideline & Improves Ability for Businesses to Comply*

**Chicago** — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that the Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in Illinois. Senate Bill 2956 passed by a unanimous vote and will head to the full Senate for consideration.

"People with disabilities are consumers, business owners, professionals, renters and students, and they have the right to access the buildings in their communities," Madigan said. "This legislation will make it easier for architects, businesses and property owners to comply with the law and provide equal access to all Illinois residents."

Attorney General Madigan initiated the legislation, sponsored by Sen. Linda Holmes, to update the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act (EBA). The EBA, which was enacted in 1985, authorizes the Attorney General's Office to enforce accessibility laws which mandate that public buildings and multi-story housing units in Illinois must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

SB 2956 amends the EBA to update state law with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act's (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Madigan's legislation streamlines the existing state statute so that architects can refer to one code in order to comply with both federal and state accessibility requirements.

"Our methods for helping those with disabilities are constantly evolving, and our related laws should do the same," Holmes said. "I applaud Attorney General Madigan's efforts to simplify, streamline and modernize our code and improve access for persons with disabilities, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation."

In addition to the legislation, Madigan's office is working with the Capital Development Board (CDB) to update the technical building regulations that correspond with the EBA, known as the Illinois Accessibility Code. Under current state law, the CDB must update the Illinois Accessibility Code to incorporate the new federal standards. Madigan's office is working with the CDB and other stakeholders to ensure that SB 2956 reflects the anticipated changes to the Illinois Accessibility Code and aligns the state statute with the federal standards.

"Uniformizing building codes is imperative to improving efficiency in the process, and makes infrastructure projects more attractive to the state of Illinois," said Dan Hohl, director of government affairs for the American Institute of Architects in Illinois.

Changes to the Environmental Barriers Act under SB 2956 include:

- Updating definitions to conform with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and corresponding updates to the Illinois Accessibility Code;
- Replacing an outdated state standard for accessibility with an easier-to-use standard that mirrors the ADA;
- Clarifying which version of the EBA and the Illinois Accessibility Code applies to new construction and alterations; and
- Updating the enforcement provisions to reflect the current emphasis on working with businesses to resolve issues and alleviate future barriers for individuals with disabilities.

Attorney General Madigan's Disability Rights Bureau protects and advances the interests of people with disabilities in Illinois, and works with public and private entities seeking to comply with disability rights laws. The bureau receives complaints regarding noncompliance with state and federal accessibility laws and works to bring facilities into compliance with state and federal accessibility standards.

Complaints about accessibility can be submitted to Madigan's office [online](#), or by contacting her Disability Rights Bureau at (312) 814-5684 (Chicago) or (217) 524-2660 (Springfield).

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