



**United States Mission to the OSCE**  
**Statement on Discrimination in the Provision of Basic Services**  
**at HDIM Session 14**

As prepared for delivery by Ambassador Michael Kozak, Head of Delegation  
Warsaw  
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The United States is deeply concerned about discrimination in the provision of basic services, such as housing, education, and safe drinking water, and the ways that such discrimination can contribute to rising inequality.

The United States fights discrimination at home with a number of federal laws and enforcement mechanisms.

In the housing sector, the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination in rental, sales or home lending transactions based on a person's national origin, race, color, religion, sex, familial status or disability. The Act also prohibits the refusal to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices or services when such accommodations are necessary to afford a person with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy a dwelling. The Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity has a mission of eliminating housing discrimination, promoting economic opportunity, and achieving diverse, inclusive communities by leading the nation in the enforcement, administration, development, and public understanding of federal fair housing policies and laws. HUD's enforcement actions reflect our nation's promise of fair housing and equal access to credit for every qualified individual, regardless of their national origin or whether they have children.

In education, the Department of Education enforces several Federal civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance from the Department of Education. Discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin is prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; sex discrimination is prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; discrimination on the basis of disability is prohibited by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and age discrimination is prohibited by the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. These civil rights statutes extend to all state education agencies, elementary and secondary school systems, colleges and universities, vocational schools, proprietary schools, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, libraries, and museums that receive U.S. Department of Education funds.

Through enforcement of these laws, the Department of Education seeks to ensure equal access to education and to promote educational excellence throughout the United States. The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) serves student populations facing discrimination and the advocates and institutions promoting systemic solutions to civil rights problems. An important responsibility is resolving complaints of discrimination. Agency-initiated cases, typically called compliance reviews, permit OCR to target resources on compliance problems that appear particularly acute. OCR also provides technical assistance to help institutions achieve voluntary compliance with the civil rights laws that OCR enforces.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a similar office that is responsible for enforcing several civil rights laws which, together, prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (including on the basis of limited-English proficiency), sex, disability, and age by applicants for and recipients of federal financial assistance from EPA. All persons, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, are entitled to receive the benefits of and participation in the programs and activities of EPA recipients without discrimination.

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