



You Are Protected by the CAA

Your Rights and Protections as a Congressional District Office Staffer

Understanding the CAA

Did you know that you are protected by the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA)? Even though you may not be physically located anywhere near the Capitol, it is important for you to remember that district office staff enjoy the same rights and protections as all other Legislative Branch employees.

The CAA applies twelve civil rights, labor, and workplace safety laws to the U.S. Congress and Legislative Branch employees. Enacted in 1995, the CAA requires the Legislative Branch to follow many of the same employment and workplace safety laws applied to private business and the Federal government. The CAA also established a dispute resolution procedure for the resolution of disputes that arise under the law.

While the rights applied by the CAA are extensive, it is important to remember what the law does not cover. Individual employing offices still maintain wide discretion in setting many workplace policies. Work schedules, job duties, salaries, vacation and leave policies, holidays, fringe benefits, or procedures for hiring and firing staff are not governed by the CAA.

Dispute Resolution

The CAA provides an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process that emphasizes non-judicial counseling and mediation

for resolving disputes that arise under the law. If, after counseling and mediation, the dispute is not resolved, an employee may then either file suit in Federal court or pursue a non-judicial administrative hearing process with the Office of Compliance.

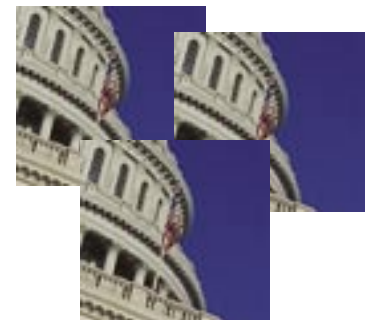
As district office staff, the CAA's dispute resolution process applies to you in the same manner as it does all other Legislative Branch employees. Where appropriate, the Office of Compliance may provide services locally to process your claims.

Certain rights applied by the CAA are not enforced through the ADR process. The General Counsel of the Office of Compliance may bring an enforcement action on behalf of employees when violations of health and safety, labor-management relations, and public services and accommodations rights of disabled persons are alleged.

For a complete description of the ADR process under the CAA, please refer to the *Procedures* section of our web site, www.compliance.gov.

What Are Your Rights Under the CAA?

Access to Public Services and Accommodations The CAA protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination with regard to access to public services, programs, activities, or places of public accommodation in Legislative Branch facilities and programs.



Age Discrimination The CAA provides that all personnel actions affecting covered employees shall be free from age discrimination for those forty years old or older.

Collective Bargaining and Unionization The CAA permits certain Legislative Branch employees to form, join, and assist a labor organization. (*Does not currently apply to all Legislative Branch employees*)

Disability Discrimination The CAA protects qualified individuals with a disability from discrimination and requires employers to make reasonable accommodations to meet their needs.

Equal Opportunity Employment The CAA requires that all personnel actions involving covered employees must be free from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

Fair Labor Standards and the Minimum Wage The CAA requires payment of the minimum wage and overtime compensation to nonexempt employees, restricts child labor, and prohibits sex discrimination in wages paid to men and women.

Family and Medical Leave Act The CAA applies benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) to covered employees. Eligible employees are entitled to take up to twelve weeks of leave in a twelve month period for certain family and medical reasons.

Notification of Office Closings or Mass Layoffs The CAA requires that employees must be notified of an office closing or of a mass layoff at least sixty days in advance of the event.

Occupational Safety and Health The CAA requires that all workplaces be free of hazards that could cause illness or injury.

Prohibition on the Use of Lie Detector Tests The CAA prohibits covered employers from requiring, requesting, using, accepting, or inquiring about the results of an employee's lie detector test.

Reprisal and Intimidation An employer may not intimidate, retaliate, or discriminate against employees who exercise their rights applied by the CAA.

Uniformed Services Rights and Protections The CAA protects employees performing service in the uniformed services from discrimination and provides certain rights to benefits and reemployment upon the completion of service.

For a complete description of all your rights under the CAA, please refer to our web page at www.compliance.gov.

The Office of Compliance

The Office of Compliance was created by the CAA to administer and enforce the Act. The Office offers an array of educational information for employees and employing offices to help make understanding and complying with the CAA easier. Our web site, www.compliance.gov, is a convenient access point for all this information for district office staff. Online, we have summaries and fact sheets on all the rights applied by the CAA, a step-by-step guide to the dispute resolution process, and useful online tools.

Want to Post a Reminder
of Your Rights Under
the CAA?
Download Our New Poster –
*Your Rights and Protections
Under the Congressional
Accountability Act*



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www.compliance.gov

The Office of Compliance advances safety, health, and workplace rights in the U.S. Congress and the Legislative Branch. Established as an independent agency by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995, the Office educates employees and employing offices about their rights and responsibilities under the Act, provides an impartial dispute resolution process, and investigates and remedies violations of the Act.

This information does not constitute advice or an official ruling of the Office of Compliance or the Board of Directors and is intended for educational purposes only. For further information, please refer to the Congressional Accountability Act (2 U.S.C 1301 et seq.) and the regulations issued by the Board, or you may contact the Office of Compliance.