



The CAA is History

The 10th Anniversary of the Passage of History Making Legislation

The Congressional Accountability Act

Do you know that you have been part of an historic event? January 2005 marked the 10th Anniversary of the passage of the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA), historic legislation that applied twelve civil rights, labor, and workplace safety laws to the U.S. Congress for the first time. The CAA ensures that you as a Congressional employee are able to enjoy many of the same workplace rights as all other Americans.

In the last decade, the CAA has made a dramatic impact on the Legislative Branch. Through the independent and neutral process established by the CAA, hundreds of disputes have been resolved and thousands of safety hazards have been identified and corrected. As a result, Congress is a better, safer, and more equitable workplace for employees and visitors.

What Are Your Rights Under the CAA?

Access to Public Services and Accommodations: The CAA protects members of the public who are 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 40 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 in all personnel actions and requires employers to make a "reasonable accommodation" to meet a disabled employee's needs.

Equal Employment Opportunity: 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: 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: The CAA applies the benefits of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) to covered employees. Eligible employees are entitled to take up to 12 weeks of leave in a 12 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 60 days in advance of the event.

Occupational Safety and Health: The CAA requires that all workplaces be free of safety and health hazards that might cause death or serious injury.

Protection from Polygraph Testing: The CAA prohibits covered employers from requiring, requesting, or using lie detectors or from accepting or inquiring about the results of an employee's lie detector test.

Reprisal and Intimidation: An employer may not intimidate, retaliate, or discrimi-

nate 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.

Dispute Resolution Under the CAA

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

At any time during the dispute resolution process the parties involved may choose to settle their dispute. Settlements may be as simple as offering an apology, but can also involve promoting an employee or providing financial compensation. All formal settlements must be in writing and must be approved by the Executive Director of the Office of Compliance.



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

The Office of Compliance

The Office of Compliance is an independent agency established to administer and enforce the CAA. The Office of Compliance administers the CAA's dispute resolution system; carries out an education and training program on the rights and responsibilities under the CAA; and advises Congress on needed changes and amendments to the CAA. The General Counsel of the Office of Compliance has independent investigatory and enforcement authority for certain violations of the CAA.

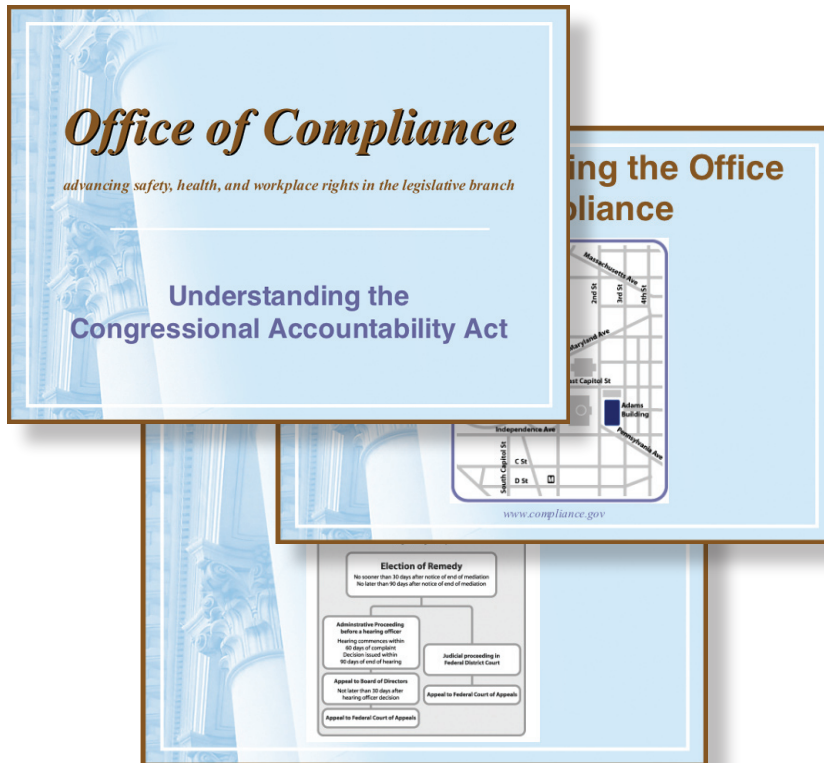
The Office of Compliance is a non-partisan independent agency within the Legislative Branch. Employees and employing offices may contact the Office of Compliance for information about the rights and protections afforded them under the CAA without fear that any contact will be reported to any other entity. All contacts and cases with the Office of Compliance are kept in strict confidence.

Find Out More About Your Rights

The Office of Compliance web site, www.compliance.gov, is a one-stop access point for information on your rights and responsibilities under the CAA. The web site has summaries and fact sheets on the rights applied by the CAA, a guide to the dispute resolution process, and online tools for both offices and employees.

Keep Staff Up to Date On the CAA.

Use our new PowerPoint presentation "Understanding the CAA" to brief staff.



This and other useful tools can be found online at www.compliance.gov.

A new addition on our web site is a downloadable PowerPoint presentation, "Understanding Your Rights Under the CAA." This presentation is a convenient briefing tool for new managers and

employees on their rights and responsibilities under the CAA.



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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.