



# COMPLIANCE @ WORK

May 2016

## An Introduction to the Office of Compliance

The Office of Compliance (OOC) is the independent, non-partisan, Legislative Branch agency that administers the Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) of 1995, 2 U.S.C. §1301, et seq. The mission of the OOC is simple – to provide a safe and accessible Legislative Branch that is free from unlawful discrimination.

### The OOC accomplishes its mission by:

- 1) operating its Administrative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system to resolve employee workplace and discrimination complaints arising under the CAA;
- 2) carrying out an education and training program on the rights and responsibilities under the CAA;
- 3) inspecting for safety and health and public access, and enforcing labor laws as applied in the CAA;
- 4) advising Congress on needed changes and amendments to the CAA.



Office of Compliance staff inspect Capitol Hill buildings and grounds to ensure worker safety and public access.

### Federal Workplace Laws of the CAA of 1995

- 1) Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970;
- 2) Federal Labor Relations Act;
- 3) Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- 4) Americans with Disabilities Act;
- 5) Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
- 6) Family and Medical Leave Act;
- 7) Fair Labor Standards Act;
- 8) Age Discrimination in Employment Act;
- 9) Worker Readjustment and Retraining Act;
- 10) Employee Polygraph Protection Act;
- 11) Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act;
- 12) Veterans Employment Opportunities Act;
- 13) Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act.

### Short History

Before Congress enacted the CAA, there were some administrative procedures in place for Legislative Branch employees to contest allegations of workplace discrimination, but there were no laws actually protecting these employees from discrimination. Additionally, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) protections did not apply to the Legislative Branch, and, unlike allegations of discrimination, there were no internal controls to ensure the application of the OSH Act. Prior to the enactment of the CAA, the Legislative Branch was not required to be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Congress passed the CAA in 1995 with nearly unanimous, bipartisan support. In doing so, Congress sought to give employees an avenue of redress for their claims of discrimination, to hold itself out as a premier employer subject to the same responsibilities and employee protections as private and other federal sector employers, and to demonstrate accountability to constituents. The CAA established the OOC and gave it the authority to enforce the thirteen federal civil rights, labor, and workplace safety laws listed above.

## How the Office of Compliance Operates

The OOC is led by a five-member, part-time and non-partisan Board of Directors, four Executive staff members (an Executive Director, two Deputy Executive Directors, and a General Counsel), and a pool of talented and dedicated employees. The OOC has exclusive jurisdiction over the Legislative Branch employing offices and employees, and functions as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Federal Labor Relations Authority, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and several divisions of the Department of Justice and the Department of Labor for the covered entities (see text box).

The OOC proposes and adopts regulations for approval by Congress to implement statutory requirements of the CAA; and carries out an education and outreach program to assist Congressional Members, employing offices, and Congressional employees in understanding their rights and obligations under the CAA.

The OOC's mandatory dispute resolution program requires formal counseling and mediation before an employee can proceed, if necessary, to an administrative hearing before a qualified hearing officer, or to a lawsuit filed in a U.S. District Court. The OOC's administrative hearing process offers relief equal to that available through the Federal Court system, but the process can resolve issues more expeditiously and more confidentially than a civil lawsuit.

### Legislative Branch Covered Employees

House of Representatives and the Senate (both Washington, DC and district/state office staff)  
Office of the Architect of the Capitol  
U.S. Capitol Police  
Office of Congressional Accessibility Services  
Congressional Budget Office  
Office of Attending Physician  
Office of Compliance.  
Certain provisions of the CAA also apply to the Government Accountability Office and to the Library of Congress.



The Office of Compliance is located in the Library of Congress Adams Building, Room LA 200, 110 Second St., SE, Washington DC 20540

For more information on the Office of Compliance or the Congressional Accountability Act please call us at (202) 724-9250 or visit [www.compliance.gov](http://www.compliance.gov).

All inquiries to the Office of Compliance are strictly confidential.