



## Summary of Model Legislation to Prevent Discrimination Against Blind Parents *Plain-language version*

Disability rights have come a long way. But parents with disabilities are still mistreated because of their disability. They are more likely to have their children taken away by the government. Courts will make it harder for them to take care of their children or spend time with them. Parents with disabilities are also told that they cannot adopt children or raise foster children. There are many causes for this kind of mistreatment. Laws affecting parents with disabilities usually come from the states.

In 2017, the National Federation for the Blind created examples of laws, called “A Bill on Parental Rights for the Blind.” States can use these examples to protect parents who are blind or have low vision. Members of this group are working across the United States to make these examples into real laws. Illinois and South Carolina have laws based on these ideas. New York, Oregon, Virginia, and Ohio are considering having this law too.

The most important parts of these laws say that:

- The government can’t stop blind people from taking care of their children because they are blind. They also can’t stop blind people from spending time with their children if somebody else takes care of them most of the time.
- Adoption agencies can’t stop blind people from adopting children because they are blind. They also can’t stop blind people from becoming foster parents.
- If somebody thinks that a parent being blind will make it harder for the child, they have to give clear reasons.
- Blind parents must have the right to show how getting help will make it easier for them to raise their children.
- If a court says that a blind parent isn’t allowed to raise children, the court must make it clear why they have decided this.