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Deaf Education in America: Examining the Shift from a Privilege to a Right

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Abstract

This paper explores the evolution of disability rights in the United States, particularly the history of deaf education. The research addresses the question of how deaf education in the United States has evolved from the 19th to the 20th century, providing a holistic view of the broader disability rights movement during this period. Using a combination of interviews, primary sources, and secondary sources, the paper argues that through important activism and legislation, deaf education transformed from a private burden to a public responsibility. The history of this transformation is crucial to understand, especially in the twenty-first century political landscape where the right to a free and public education for deaf people may be compromised through the dismantling of the Department of Education.

Keywords: *Deaf History, Disability History, Deaf Rights, Disability Rights, Deaf Education, Disability Education, Responsibility to Rights, Disability Activism, Disability Legislations, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Rehabilitation Act of 1973, IDEA Funding, Thomas Hopkin Gallaudet, Laurent Clerc, Dr. Mason Fitch Cogswell.*

PROCESS PAPER

For my paper, I wanted to conduct research on a historical site near Farmington, Connecticut, where I attend school. I realized an important site was the American School for the Deaf, now located in West Hartford, Connecticut, the oldest permanent school for deaf students in the United States. With my parents, I visited the school and signed up for a tour at Cogswell Heritage House, the school's archives. I conducted an interview with Brad Moseley, the overseer of the archives, who gave me a booklet created by the American School for the Deaf about its history and key figures through the years, which I consulted when writing my paper (see Appendix A).

For other portions of my paper, I used scholarly books and research journals to chart the evolution of deaf rights and the disabilities rights movement. I also interviewed the director of services for disabled students at my school to learn about the impact of the ADA in private schools. In my conclusion, where I write about the future of deaf rights and deaf education, I paid close attention to the multiple perspectives of experts who disagree on the future of disability rights under the Trump administration.

I created my project by connecting the evolution of deaf rights and deaf education from ancient times to the present. I began by writing an outline that organized the key information I wanted to highlight, particularly focusing on the transition from the historically common belief that deaf people were "unteachable" to the emergence of deaf and disability rights, with federal law providing a "free, appropriate public education" in the least restrictive space possible. It was difficult to find the propellers of change, but through reading multiple books written by disability rights experts and activists, I narrowed the two main causes of change to the impact of World War II and then the synergy of the disability rights movement with the Civil Rights Movement.

During my interview with Mr. Moseley, I learned important information regarding the founding of the school, which consequently helped me form my historical argument. Mr. Moseley told me how the school was first envisioned by Dr. Cogswell, a wealthy Hartford citizen who had a deaf daughter. I formed my argument that, initially, the education of the deaf was primarily the responsibility of deaf people or their families. With minimal support from the government, deaf education was a privilege, not a right. However, after several impactful laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, were enacted in the 20th century, education for the deaf shifted to becoming a public responsibility and a right for deaf citizens rather than a private burden. This transformation is significant because it demonstrates how a marginalized group achieved the right to an education – one just like those of able-bodied people. In my paper, I show the American School for the Deaf's role in the broader disabilities rights movement, prompting rights and responsibilities in deaf education to shift over time.

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INTRODUCTION

The American School for the Deaf, the first permanent school for deaf people, was established in 1817 in Hartford, Connecticut, by Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, Laurent Clerc, and Dr. Mason Fitch Cogswell, marking a key step towards greater equality for people with disabilities and an early event in the American disabilities rights movement.[1] Beginning in the late 19th century, individuals with disabilities protested discriminatory policies and attitudes.[2] By the mid-20th century, disabled people and their allies joined together to achieve their shared goal of attaining rights equal to those of able-bodied citizens.[3]

Grassroots activism characterized the disability rights movement.[4] Prior to the passage of disability-rights legislation in the 1970s, which culminated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, government support was minimal.[5] As a result, efforts to educate the deaf were primarily the responsibility of deaf people or their families.

However, after the passing of IDEA and through the efforts of the disability rights movement, deaf education became a public responsibility and a right for deaf citizens, as opposed to a private burden. This shift occurred because disabled WWII veterans brought disability rights into public view.[6] The disability rights movement also experienced synergy with the 1960s Civil Rights Movement when civil rights activists persuaded Americans that equality and rights for all were a public concern.[7] Deaf rights, like other rights for the disabled, did not become a public responsibility with guaranteed rights until the 1970s with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, when wounded veterans and the Civil Rights Movement convinced the federal government to better care for people with disabilities. This paper will detail the transformation of education for deaf people - a crucial right - from a private burden to a public responsibility.

1 "The American School for the Deaf," literature from the American School for the Deaf, no publication date available.

2 Michael Rembis, Catherine Kudlick, and Kim E. Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History (Oxford University Press, 2017), 439.

3 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 439.

4 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 439.

5 "Disability Rights Timeline," United States Coast Guard, effective September 28, 2023, https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/Latest-Civil-Right-News/Article/3541201/disability-rights-timeline/.

6 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442.

7 "Disability Rights and Racial Justice," Legal Defense Fund, accessed January 15, 2025, https://www.naacpldf.org/disability-rights-and-racial-justice/.

A Concise History of Disability Rights

The treatment of deaf people varied widely across time and was dependent on whether the individual was born deaf or later became deaf. In Ancient Greece, when a disabled child was born, the father decided whether the child would live.[8] However, the Romans recognized deaf people as requiring special protection from others in the community.[9] Similarly, the ancient Hebrews and Egyptians treated disabled persons with respect. In Egypt, blind men often became musicians,[10] and the Hebrews considered disabilities as a fact of life, part of God's creation.[11]Although deaf people were "legally incompetent"—they couldn't own property or hold other legal rights—the Hebrews believed the deaf could be taught to write, even if they could not speak.[12]

During the early Middle Ages, deaf adults were objects of ridicule, serving as court jesters or committed to asylums because their behaviors were thought to be the result of demonic possession.[13] The Catholic Church viewed deaf people as heathens and barred them from attending church services because they were unable to hear the word of God.[14] Thus, across the Middle Ages, deaf people were viewed as abnormal and routinely ostracized.[15]

The Renaissance saw the beginning of a movement to improve the lives of the deaf through education. During this period of rebirth and growth, deaf people were recognized as people with abilities, too.[16] Therefore, deaf Europeans were taught to read and write.[17] For deaf children of wealthy

8 Melvia M. Nomeland and Ronald E. Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America: History in the Making (McFarland, 2011), 4-13.

9 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.

10 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.

11 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13; for more information on treatment of people with disabilities in Judaism, see also Judith Z. Abrams, Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli (Gallaudet University Press, 1998).

12 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13; for more information on treatment of people with disabilities in Judaism, see also Abrams, Judaism and Disability.

13 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.

14 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.

15 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.

16 Marina RADIĆ ŠESTIĆ, Nadežda DIMIĆ*, Mia ŠEŠUM, "The Beginnings of Education of the Deaf Persons: Renaissance Europe," Specijalna edukacija i rehabilitacija 11 (2021): 147-165. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/477908073.pdf

17 ŠESTIĆ, DIMIĆ*,ŠEŠUM, "The Beginnings of Education of the Deaf Persons."

families, they were sent to monasteries or taught by tutors due to the limited number of schools for the deaf.[18] *De InventioneDialectica* (On Dialectical Invention), published in 1548 by Rudolph Agricola, a Dutch scholar, described a deaf-mute who learned to read and write.[19] Italian physician Dr. Girolamo Cardano discovered Agricola's story and was impressed.[20] Cardano's firstborn son was deaf, and he reasoned that written words were independent of the sounds of speech; thus, deaf people could be taught without aural references.[21] He theorized that a deaf individual might be taught to "hear" by reading and to "speak" by writing, and he recognized deaf people's ability to reason.[22] Centuries later, American professor Dr. Ruth Bender called Cardano's findings "a revolutionary declaration," thus breaking down the long-standing belief that hearing words was necessary to understand ideas.[23]

Enlightenment-era thinkers emphasized education to promote freedom and morality.[24] The inquiry and reason that drove the Enlightenment made education valuable, improving education for all. The democratization of education began, slowly but surely, to extend beyond children born in wealthy families to the children of common people,[25] and soon, the first special school for the deaf opened in France.[26]

Early Deaf Education in the United States

In 1812, William Bolling, the father of a deaf son, founded the first American school for the deaf in Manchester, Virginia.[27] He employed John Braidwood of Edinburgh to run the oral school, which educated deaf students through speech lessons rather than through signs.[28] The school began with much promise, well-supported both financially and in attendance, but Braidwood soon abandoned the school.[29]

Around the same time, public interest increased in founding a school for deaf students, and Pennsylvanian Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet traveled to Europe to learn the methods employed in teaching the deaf (see Appendix C).[30] He went to Paris and brought back a young French instructor, Laurent Clerc, to tour New England, lecturing about deaf education and securing support for a school.[31] In response, Connecticut's legislature granted $5,000, and President James Monroe gave a land grant that helped build the "Old Hartford" campus of the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut (see Appendix B).[32] The American School for the Deaf opened on April 15, 1817, marking a landmark moment in deaf education as the first organized institution for the aid of the deaf in the United States.[33]

In 1827, Justus Bradley of Tallmadge, Ohio, the father of three deaf daughters, established a school for deaf children.[34] Colonel Smith, a deaf and mute person who was educated at the American School for the Deaf, ran the institution.[35] The Ohio legislature appropriated $100 toward his salary, and eleven pupils enrolled.[36] Tallmadge's school used the Hartford method, developed by Gallaudet and Clerc, which used objects and signs to train "dormant vocal organs to definite muscular action."[37]

In 1843, William Willard, a deaf and mute person, organized a school in nearby Indianapolis, Indiana, for which the state appropriated $200.[38] In 1844, Willard's school was taken over by the state of Indiana and reopened as a state-run school.[39]

A pattern appears in this history of early American deaf schools: efforts to open deaf schools were initiated by deaf people or their families. This demonstrates how early on in the schooling of the American deaf, their education was

18 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.
19 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.
20 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.
21 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.
22 Nomeland and Nomeland, The Deaf Community in America, 4-13.
23 Nomeland and Nomeland, *The Deaf Community in America*, 4-13.
24 Michalina Clifford-Vaughan, "Enlightenment and Education," The British Journal of Sociology 14, no. 2 (1963): 135–43 https://doi.org/10.2307/586775.
25 Marcel Broesterhuizen, From Ephphatha to Deaf Pastors: Deaf Pastoral Ministry, Vol. 46, Peeters Publishers, 2019 https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q26q69.
26 Isaac Lewis Peet, "The Influence of the Life and Work of the Abbe de L'épée," American Annals of the Deaf 35, no. 2 (1890): 138, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44627200.
27 John W Jones, "One Hundred Years of History in the Education of the Deaf in America and Its Present Status," American Annals of the Deaf 63, no. 1 (1918): 1–47 http://www.jstor.org/stable/44462669; for a different account see also, Betty Miller Unterberger, "The First Attempt to Establish an Oral School for the Deaf and Dumb in the United States," The Journal of Southern History 13, no. 4 (1947): 557, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2198327.
28 Unterberger, "The First Attempt to Establish an Oral School," 566.
29 Jones, "The Education of the Deaf in America," 1–47.
30 Moseley, interview.
31 Moseley, interview.
32 Moseley, interview.
33 Moseley, interview.
34 Collins Stone, "Ohio Institution for Deaf and Dumb," American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb 5, no. 4 (1853): 221–39, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44401232.
35 Jones, "The Education of the Deaf in America," 1–47.
36 Jones, "The Education of the Deaf in America," 1–47.
37 Gilbert O. Fay, "The Relation of Hartford to the Education of the Deaf," American Annals of the Deaf 44, no. 6 (1899): 419–35, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44463449.
38 Jones, "The Education of the Deaf in America," 1–47.
39 Jones, "The Education of the Deaf in America," 1–47.

primarily a personal responsibility rather than a civic or public responsibility. Though state governments moderately supported deaf schools once they were opened, few states assumed widespread responsibility for educating the deaf people living in the state. Thus, in the 19th century, deaf people received their education usually as a privilege rather than as a legally-recognized right.

Private Responsibilities Become Public Rights

The transformation from private responsibility to public right began during the 1930s and extended through the 1960s, driven by numerous factors, including the activism of veterans and civil-rights organizers.[40] World War II made more jobs available to people with disabilities.[41] When people, including the deaf, who were often deemed "mentally deficient" entered those jobs, their status and esteem in the eyes of other Americans increased.[42] This recognition contributed to the rise of disability-rights activism during and after the war.[43]

In the years following WWII, minority groups questioned their inferior status in American society, as there was a growing international awareness of the importance of human rights.[44] Throughout the post-war period and into the Vietnam War era, disabled veterans raised awareness about the inadequacies of government programs.[45] John Lancaster, a Vietnam veteran, fought for greater equality.[46] He recalls:

> A lot of the things that we did were working on accessibility issues and regulatory
>
> issues and transportation issues. [Veterans] were doing a lot of work to try and
>
> influence the administration at the time to write regulations on Sections 504 and
>
> 503 and 502 and 501 of the Rehab Act. And we were also working very hard to
>
> get regulations written on Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment
>
> Act. So we did a lot of things on those laws. Personally, I thought veterans signed
>
> up to serve, and what better way could we serve our country than to improve the
>
> lives and the inclusion and the employment and the access and the participation of
>
> citizens that were being denied that access, and being severely discriminated
>
> against?[47]

By questioning who had access to full citizenship in American society, wounded veterans, many of whom were now part of the disabled community, fueled political, cultural, and economic changes.[48]

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s also helped propel the disability rights movement's growing momentum.[49] Both movements wanted equality, justice, and inclusion for marginalized communities. Influenced by civil-rights activism, disability-rights activists employed similar tactics, like sit-ins, to protest the unequal treatment of and lack of accessibility for people with disabilities.[50]

As a result, numerous laws were enacted by the federal government to enshrine disability rights. Congress passed Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act as the first piece of legislation to provide civil-rights protections for disabled people in programs receiving federal financial assistance.[51] Section 504 states that "no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that either receives federal financial assistance or is conducted by any executive agency or the United States Postal Service."[52] Common requirements of Section 504 include reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. For deaf people, programs must provide qualified interpreters, real-time captioning, and

40 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442; for more information on the status of disabled veterans, see also David A. Gerber, "Disabled Veterans, the State, and the Experience of Disability in Western Societies, 1914-1950," Journal of Social History 36, no. 4 (2003): 899-916, https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jsh.2003.0095.

41 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442.

42 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442.

43 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442.

44 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442.

45 Gerber, "Disabled Veterans," 899-916.

46 Fred Pelka, What We Have Done: An Oral History of the Disability Rights Movement (University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 359.

47 Fred Pelka, What We Have Done: An Oral History of the Disability Rights Movement (University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 359.

48 Rembis, Kudlick, and Nielsen, The Oxford Handbook of Disability History, 442.

49 Richard K. Scotch, "Politics and Policy in the History of the Disability Rights Movement," The Milbank Quarterly 67 (1989): 380–400 https://doi.org/10.2307/3350150.

50 "Disability Rights and Racial Justice."

51 Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer, Disabled Rights (Georgetown University Press, 2003), 60.

52 "Guide to Disability Rights Laws." ADA.gov, last modified February 28, 2020, https://www.ada.gov/resources/disability-rights-guide/.

assistive listening devices when necessary to ensure effective communication.[53]

Later, the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act provided equal access to public education and eventually became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990.[54] The IDEA requires public school systems to provide a "free, appropriate public education" to disabled children in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs.[55]

Public school systems must develop appropriate Individualized Education Programs (IEP) for each child, and procedures must be followed in the development of the IEP.[56] The specific services outlined in each IEP reflect the individualized needs of each student,[57] and must be developed by a team of knowledgeable persons (teacher, parents, the disabled child, and specialist) and reviewed annually.[58]

In 1990, the most famous disability-rights act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) extended disability protection to the private sector.[59] The ADA prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in employment, public services, business interactions, transportation, telecommunications, and more.[60] It set new standards for accessibility, making public spaces, buildings, and services more inclusive.[61] The ADA has transformed the lives of millions of Americans by ensuring equal rights and opportunities. Before the ADA, which is now a cornerstone of disability-rights legislation, people were deprived of opportunities due to their disabilities. For deaf people, communication was a struggle, and being deaf was a barrier to employment.[62] Gerald Buckley, president of RIT's National Technical Institute for the Deaf, credits the ADA with giving rise to the deaf middle class.[63] He notes:

> "And now, it's not unusual. I mean, we live in Rochester. You're
>
> not surprised to hear we have two deaf veterinarians; we have a deaf dentist, we
>
> have multiple deaf PhDs, we have several physicians who are deaf. But if you
>
> went back 30 years ago, that wasn't true."[64]

For deaf students in private schools, ADA ensures everyone with a documented disability has a right to access and is provided with reasonable accommodations, furthering education for the deaf as a right rather than a privilege.[65] These accommodations range from scheduling classes for deaf students in accessible spaces to working with assistive technology like captioning systems.[66]

Although people with disabilities constitute one of the largest minorities in the United States, their rights-related legislation was met with vehement opposition from many, including President Richard Nixon, the National Federation of Independent Business, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the editorials of the *New York Times*, which reasserted misleading platitudes relating to disability, casting disabled people as individuals seeking to "play the system" to avoid having to work.[67] Nixon initially vetoed the Rehabilitation Act of 1972 because he believed supporting medical and social welfare policies was too costly.[68] The Act was finally signed into law when Nixon and Congress worked out a compromise bill, which reduced funding levels, eliminated proposed programs, and lessened the priority service provided to the

53 "Section 504 and ADA Obligations of Public Schools," National Association of the Deaf, accessed January 15, 2025 at, https://www.nad.org/resources/education/k-12-education/section-504-and-ada-obligations-of-public-schools/

54 Jeffrey J. Zettel and Joseph Ballard, "The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 PL 94-142: Its History, Origins, and Concepts," Journal of Education 3, no. 161 (1979): 5-22, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/002205747916100303.

55 Zettel and Ballard, "The Education for all Handicapped Children Act," 5-22.

56 "Section 504 and ADA Obligations of Public Schools."

57 "Deaf Students Education Services," U.S. Department of Education, accessed January 15, 2025, https://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9806.html#:~:text=Meeting%20the%20unique%20communication%20and,(FAPE)%20to%20the%20child.

58 "The Law and the IEP: Establishing and Maintaining High Expectations for Deaf Students with Disabilities," ERIC 15 (2014): 80-84, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1030997.

59 "Guide to Disability Rights Laws."

60 "Guide to Disability Rights Laws."

61 "Guide to Disability Rights Laws."

62 Beth Adams, "How the Americans with Disabilities Act changed life for deaf people," WXXI News, July 27, 2020, https://www.wxxinews.org/inclusion-desk/2020-07-27/how-the-americans-with-disabilities-act-changed-life-for-deaf-people.

63 Adams, "How the Americans with Disabilities Act changed life for deaf people."

64 Adams, "How the Americans with Disabilities Act changed life for deaf people."

65 Rebecca Plona, "Accommodations at Miss Porter's for Deaf Students Under ADA," interview by Yuman Wu.

66 Plona, interview.

67 Doris Zames Fleischer and Frieda Zames, "Disability Rights: The Overlooked Civil Rights Issue," Disability Studies Quarterly 4, no. 25 (2005), https://dsq-sds.org/index.php/dsq/article/view/629/806.

68 United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Civil Rights Law," 47; see also "Veto of the Vocational Rehabilitation Bill.," The American Presidency Project, accessed January 22, 2025, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/veto-the-vocational-rehabilitation-bill.

severely handicapped.[69] This difficult process of achieving equal rights highlights the perseverance of disabled people and their allies.

Looking Forward: The Next Frontier of Disability Rights

Through impactful legislation such as the Rehabilitation Act, the IDEA, and the ADA, the right to an education for deaf and disabled people was secured. Formerly a privilege, education for deaf students has evolved, starting from the first permanent school established in Hartford, Connecticut, to rights that mirror those of able-bodied people.[70]

Despite these impactful statutes, funding for deaf students continues to fall short. Recently, Congress has considered "full funding" to IDEA-created programs, which originally authorized federal funding for up to 40% of average per-pupil spending yet has never reached its target.[71] In a change of course in 2023, Congress approved a 20% increase in appropriations for IDEA and purportedly planned to grow appropriations in coming years.[72]

Even with these increased appropriations, education funding formulas need reform. Disparities in IDEA funding exist across the states, and states with more children eligible for special education receive fewer dollars per child than states with less need.[73] Large states and states with more children experiencing poverty also receive fewer IDEA dollars per child, making equal educational opportunity for low-income disabled students an ongoing challenge.[74]

Additionally, the next frontier in disability rights is uncertain, with the Trump administration's threats to the US Department of Education (DOE)[75] and the effect of President Trump's executive orders on IDEA funding approved by Congress.[76]

The IDEA guarantees students with disabilities their rightful public education, and the law would remain even if the DOE disbanded.[77] However, it is unclear how disabled students' rights will remain protected. Eric Hanushek, a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, considered Trump's threats to be only a "political statement about how much we want Washington to be intruding in state education policy," and that it wouldn't actually change much for students with disabilities.[78]

On the other hand, Tuan Nguyen, an associate professor at the University of Missouri, worries that without the DOE pressuring states to meet certain standards for teaching, students with disabilities would be disadvantaged.[79] Amanda Levin Mazin, a senior lecturer at Columbia University's Teachers College, adds that without the DOE, support for special-education teachers will evaporate.[80]

Needless to say, the future for disability rights hangs in the balance, but it is essential to continue advancing rights for the disabled and realizing the promises of equal education for everyone. Education for the deaf has shifted from a largely private responsibility to a public responsibility, and that is how it should ultimately stay.

Appendix A

This is a photo of Mr. Moseley and me after I conducted my interview.

Xiuping Wang. "Photo of Yuman Wu and Mr. Moseley, Tour Guide at Cogswell Heritage House." 3 September 2024. Cogswell Heritage House.

69 United States Commission on Civil Rights, "Civil Rights Law," 47.
70 "The American School for the Deaf," literature from the American School for the Deaf.
71 Hyman, Rivkin, and Rosenbaum, "How IDEA Fails Families Without Means," 111.
72 Kolbe, Dhuey, and Doutre, "Reconsidering Funding Formulas."
73 Kolbe, Dhuey, and Doutre, "Reconsidering Funding Formulas."
74 Hyman, Rivkin, and Rosenbaum, "How IDEA Fails Families Without Means," 111.
75 Mark Lieberman, "How Trump's Policies Could Affect Special Education," Education Week, November 18, 2024, https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-trumps-policies-could-affect-special-education/2024/11
76 Michael D. Shear, "Judge Stays Trump's Federal Funding Freeze, but Disruption to Medicaid Sows Fear," New York Times, January 28, 2025, https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/28/us/politics/trump-freeze-funding.html.
77 Kalyn Belsha, "Trump plan to ax the Education Department might affect kids with disabilities a lot — or a little," Chalkbeat, November 15, 2024, https://www.chalkbeat.org/2024/11/15/trump-abolishing-education-department-may-hurt-students-with-disabilities/.
78 Belsha, "Trump plan to ax the Education Department."
79 Belsha, "Trump plan to ax the Education Department."
80 Belsha, "Trump plan to ax the Education Department."

Appendix B

This photo shows the front of Cogswell Heritage House, the archives of the history of the American School for the Deaf.

Yuman Wu. "Cogswell Heritage House at the American School for the Deaf." 3 September 2024. Cogswell Heritage House.

Appendix C

The statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet stands before the entrance of the school, showing one of the founders who greatly contributed to deaf education in the United States.

Yuman Wu. "Statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet." 3 September 2024. Cogswell Heritage House.

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1. Pelka, Fred. *What We Have Done: An Oral History of the Disability Rights Movement* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2012).

   Fred Pelka presents first-hand accounts from disability-rights activists who engaged in the movement. I used the account of John Lancaster, a Vietnam-era Marine Corps veteran, to describe how the work of disabled veterans prompted the signing of several impactful laws.

Journal Articles

2. Fay, Gilbert O. "The Relation of Hartford to the Education of the Deaf." *American Annals of the Deaf* 44, no. 6 (1899): 419–35. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44463449.

   This account of the American School for the Deaf, written by a school instructor, highlights the role of the school in the broader context of deaf education in America. I used it to explain the "Hartford method."

3. Jones, John W. "One Hundred Years of History in the Education of the Deaf in America and its Present Status." *American Annals of the Deaf* 63, no. 1 (1918): 1–47. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44462669?seq=1

   This source describes the various schools for the deaf established in the 19th century. I used this source to outline the early history of education for deaf people in the United States.

4. Peet, Isaac Lewis. "The Influence of the Life and Work of the Abbe de L'Épée." *American Annals of the Deaf* 35, no. 2 (1890): 133–50. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44627200.

   Isaac Lewis Peet describes the influence of the Abbe Charles Michel de l'Epée on the education of deaf students through founding the first school for the deaf in the world. I used this source to examine the founding of the first school for the deaf.

5. Scotch, Richard K. "Politics and Policy in the History of the Disability Rights Movement." *The Milbank Quarterly* 67 (1989): 380–400. https://doi.org/10.2307/3350150.

   Published in 1989, this journal article describes the mixed results disability-rights activists achieved over the years. I used this as a primary source to examine how the disability-rights movement moved in tandem with other movements of the era.

6. STONE, COLLINS. "OHIO INSTITUTION FOR DEAF AND DUMB." *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb* 5, no. 4 (1853): 221–39. http://www.jstor.org/stable/44401232.

   This primary source explains in detail the process of establishing a school for the deaf in Ohio. I used this to establish a connection of how other schools for the deaf were influenced by the first school for the deaf in Hartford.

7. Unterberger, Betty Miller. "The First Attempt to Establish an Oral School for the Deaf and Dumb in the United States." *The Journal of Southern History* 13, no. 4 (1947): 556–66.

Betty Miller Unterberger describes a different account of the first oral school for the deaf in Manchester, Virginia, compared to the account of John W. Jones in "One Hundred Years of History in the Education of the Deaf in America and its Present Status." This helped me understand what the oral method for teaching deaf students was, but I decided to use John W. Jones' account for facts on the deaf school in Manchester, Virginia, because I found it to be more trustworthy, as it corroborated with some details of Gallaudet University's site.

8. Zettel, J. J., & Ballard, J. (1979). The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 PL 94-142: Its History, Origins, and Concepts. *Journal of Education*, 161(3), 5-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/002205747916100303

   This research article provides an account of the standards established by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act. I used this to research how this legislation determines a disabled student's education as appropriate for them.

News Articles

9. Adams, Beth. "How the Americans with Disabilities Act changed life for deaf people." *WXXI News*. July 27, 2020. https://www.wxxinews.org/inclusion-desk/2020-07-27/how-the-americans-with-disabilities-act-changed-life-for-deaf-people.

   This news article details an interview with Gerard Buckley, a deaf man, on the impact of ADA in his life. I used this in my paper to demonstrate that the passing of ADA was crucial to the success of disabled and deaf people.

Appendix Photos

10. Wang, Xiuping. "Photo of Yuman Wu and Mr. Moseley, Tour Guide at Cogswell Heritage House." 3 September 2024. Cogswell Heritage House.

    This is a photo of the tour guide and me at Cogswell Heritage House after I conducted the interview. I wanted to show a key person whose interview with me helped me understand the significance of the founding of the American School for the Deaf. After this interview, I decided I wanted my paper to be about the change in the rights and responsibilities of deaf education over time.

11. Wu, Yuman. "Cogswell Heritage House at the American School for the Deaf." 3 September 2024. Cogswell Heritage House.

    This is a photo I took of Cogswell Heritage House, the museum at the American School for the Deaf. Through touring this place, I saw first-hand the rich history of the school.

12. Wu, Yuman. "Statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet." 3 September 2024. Cogswell Heritage House.

    This statue of Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet is featured in front of the school's main entrance. It is a replica built by the National Association of the Deaf in 1925 to replace the monument erected in 1854 at the original site of the school. I included this photo to give a sense of how long the school has been established and how the founders of the school, including Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, laid the foundation for the education of the deaf across states in America.

Secondary Sources

Books

13. Abrams, Judith Z. *Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavli.* Gallaudet University Press, 1998.

    Judith Abrams explores the evolution of Jewish attitudes towards people with disabilities. I cite this source directly in my paper and used it for crucial historical context to learn more about the treatment of disabled people across cultures.

14. Nomeland, Melvia M. and Nomeland, Ronald E. *The Deaf Community in America: History in the Making.* McFarland, 2011.

    The Deaf Community in America: History in the Making describes the prevailing attitudes towards deaf people across different eras and in various cultures. I used this book to analyze the changing perception and treatment of deaf people and disabled people in general.

15. Rembis, Michael, Kudlick, Catherine, and Nielsen, Kim E. *The Oxford Handbook of Disability History.* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

    This handbook examines the actions taken by disabled people and their allies during the disability-rights movement to push important legislation that ensured equal rights. I used this to detail the disability-rights movement in America.

16. Switzer, Jacqueline Vaughn. *Disabled Rights.* Georgetown University Press, 2003.

    Jacqueline Vaughn Switzer notes in her book the importance of Section 504 in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. I used this book in my paper to explain the significance of the Rehabilitation Act, as it was the first piece of legislation that provided civil-rights protections for disabled people in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance.

Booklets

17. "The American School for the Deaf." Literature from the American School for the Deaf. No publication date available.

    This booklet was given to me when I toured the museum of the American School for the Deaf. It contains information on the history of the founding of the school. I used this source to write about the key members that helped establish the school.

Interviews

18. Moseley, Brad. "Tour of Cogswell Heritage House at the American School for the Deaf." Interview by Yuman Wu.

    I conducted this interview with Brad Moseley, a tour guide at Cogswell Heritage House of the American School for the Deaf. This interview helped me understand key details about the Hartford school, and I used this in my paper to give background information on the school and its founders.

19. Plona, Rebecca. "Accommodations at Miss Porter's for Deaf Students Under the ADA." Interview by Yuman Wu.

    I conducted this interview with Rebecca Plona, the director of academic growth at my school, who manages services for students with disabilities. Through this interview, I learned the measures set in place that ensure "reasonable accommodations [are provided] to anyone who is otherwise qualified to attend to Miss Porter's." After this interview, I wrote about the immense impact of the ADA for deaf students and students of all disabilities in their education.

Periodicals

20. Belsha, Kalyn. "Trump plan to ax the Education Department might affect kids with disabilities a lot — or a little." *Chalkbeat*, November 15, 2024. https://www.chalkbeat.org/2024/11/15/trump-abolishing-education-department-may-hurt-students-with-disabilities/

    This article explains how the incoming administration's plan would impact education for students with disabilities, featuring commentary by experts with different perspectives. I used it as evidence demonstrating that the future of disability rights is uncertain.

21. Broesterhuizen, Marcel. *From Ephphatha to Deaf Pastors: Deaf Pastoral Ministry*. Vol. 46. Peeters Publishers, 2019. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1q26q69.

    From Ephphatha to Deaf Pastors: Deaf Pastoral Ministry describes the relationship between the Christian church and the deaf. I used this to write about how deaf people were treated by Christians in the Middle Ages.

22. Clifford-Vaughan, Michalina. "Enlightenment and Education." *The British Journal of Sociology* 14, no. 2 (1963): 135–43. https://doi.org/10.2307/586775.

    This journal article highlights the values of the French Enlightenment, particularly regarding education, and its impact on society. I used this to explore why great strides were made in deaf education during the Enlightenment.

23. Fleischer, Doris Zames and Zames, Frieda. "Disability Rights: The Overlooked Civil Rights Issue." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 25 (2005), https://dsq-sds.org/index.php/dsq/article/view/629/806.

    This source highlights the attitudes of the media and the public towards disability rights legislation. I used this source to show the difficult process of passing impactful pieces of legislation in the 20th century.

24. Gerber, David A. "Disabled Veterans, the State, and the Experience of Disability in Western Societies, 1914-1950." *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 4 (2003): 899-916.

    This journal article discusses the relationship between veterans and welfare programs in more depth. I didn't use this in my paper directly, but I examined it to better understand the role veterans played in convincing the government to establish programs for all disabled people.

25. Hyman, Elysa, Rivkin, Dean Hill, and Rosenbaum, Stephen A. "How IDEA Fails Families Without Means: Causes and Corrections from the Frontlines of Special Education Lawyering." *American University Journal of Gender Social Policy & Law*, 107 (2011-2012): 111, HeinOnline.

    This journal article discusses how lawyers advocate for wealthy children to reap the educational benefits of the IDEA while low-income children - the majority of the disabled population - struggle for equal educational opportunities. I used this in my conclusion when examining current barriers to truly attaining equal education for disabled people.

26. Kolbe, Tammy, Dhuey, Elizabeth, and Doutre, Sara Menlove. "More money is not enough: The case for reconsidering federal special education funding formulas." *Brookings*, October 3, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/articles/more-money-is-not-enough-the-case-for-reconsidering-federal-special-education-funding-formulas/.

    This article explains the systematic disparities in IDEA funding across states. I used it as evidence for a possible solution to the problems of chronic underfunding of special education programs.

27. Lieberman, Mark. "How Trump's Policies Could Affect Special Education." *Education Week*, November 18, 2024. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/how-trumps-policies-could-affect-special-education/2024/11

    This article presents the logistics of abolishing the Department of Education and its possible impact on disabled people. I used it for its insights into the uncertain status of education rights over the next few years.

28. Melcher, Sarah. "Disability and the Hebrew Bible: A Survey and Appraisal." *Currents in Biblical Research*, 1, no. 18 (2019): 7-31. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1476993X19861951

    Sarah Melcher provides an overview of the significant studies on disability in the Hebrew Bible. I did not use this in my paper directly but through reading the article, I gained a clearer understanding of how disabilities were treated in Judaism.

29. ŠESTIĆ, Marina RADIĆ, DIMIĆ*, Nadežda, and ŠEŠUM, Mia. "The Beginnings of Education of the Deaf Persons: Renaissance Europe."*Specijalnaedukacijairehabilitacij a* 11 (2021): 147-165. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/477908073.pdf

This source explains how the perception of deaf people changed in the Renaissance. Using this source, I wrote about how the Renaissance was a transformative time for deaf people as they began to receive an education.

30. "The Law and the IEP: Establishing and Maintaining High Expectations for Deaf Students with Disabilities," *ERIC* 15 (2014): 80-84.

This journal article describes the team assembled to carry out disabled students' Individualized Education Programs (IEP) and to set high expectations that are attainable. I used this source to explain the current process that ensures that disabled students receive a quality education.

31. United States Commission on Civil Rights. "Federal Civil Rights Law and Handicapped Persons." In *Accommodating the Spectrum of Individual Rights* (Clearinghouse, 1983), 47.

This source explains Nixon's initial veto of legislation that would have greatly helped the disabled community. Through compromise, the Rehabilitation Act was finally signed into law in 1973. I used this source to demonstrate how attaining impactful rights for disabled people was difficult due to the opposition of politicians and other organizations.

Websites

32. ADA.gov. "Guide to Disability Rights Laws." Last modified February 28, 2020. https://www.ada.gov/resources/disability-rights-guide/.

This site provides an overview of each federal civil rights law that ensures equal opportunity for people with disabilities. I used it to determine which laws were most impactful for disabled people to achieve equality with non-disabled people.

33. Legal Defense Fund. "Disability Rights and Racial Justice." Accessed January 15, 2025. https://www.naacpldf.org/disability-rights-and-racial-justice/

This website explains the connection between the civil rights movement and the disability-rights movement. I used this to demonstrate how the civil rights movement influenced the disability-rights movement's success.

34. National Association of the Deaf. "Section 504 and ADA Obligations of Public Schools." Accessed January 15, 2025. https://www.nad.org/resources/education/k-12-education/section-504-and-ada-obligations-of-public-schools/

This site explains the steps taken to ensure that disabled students have a "free, appropriate public education" as outlined by the IDEA. I used this site to describe how the current law works to provide disabled students with an education equal to that of their able-bodied peers.

35. United States Coast Guard. "Disability Rights Timeline." Effective September 28, 2023. https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Civil-Rights/Latest-Civil-Right-News/Article/3541201/disability-rights-timeline/.

This website shows a timeline of significant milestones and legislative changes for disability rights. I consulted this to see what time each legislation was passed.

36. U.S. Department of Education. "Deaf Students Education Services." Accessed January 15, 2025. https://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9806.html#:~:text=Meeting%20the%20unique%20communication%20and,(FAPE)%20to%20the%20child

The US Department of Education's rules on deaf student services provide guidelines for disabled students. I used this source to better understand the services the Department of Education provides and the possible disruption of services disabled students would face if the DOE was dismantled.

News Articles

37. Shear, Michael D. "Judge Stays Trump's Federal Funding Freeze, but Disruption to Medicaid Sows Fear." *New York Times*. January 28, 2025. https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/28/us/politics/trump-freeze-funding.html.

This article explains the impact of current executive orders, particularly a freeze in funding on schools, hospitals, nonprofits, and more. I used this to discuss how although an increase in IDEA funding has been approved by Congress, the state of IDEA funding may change yet again with these orders, highlighting the uncertainty of education for deaf students.