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“Good News — for Now”: Advocates Welcome Back Federal Staff but Warn Fight Isn’t Over

Denver, CO — Disability Law Colorado today welcomed news that the U.S. Department of Education will reinstate some of the staff it laid off five months ago. But DLC warned that the administration’s push to demolish the department — and sabotage civil rights — is not over.

The decision comes two months after a federal judge ordered the department to restore the Office for Civil Rights to its former capacity. The department put more than 1,300 employees — one-third of its total workforce — on administrative leave in March, stalling investigations and leaving families in limbo.

“I’m glad that 260 of those employees will be back at work,” said **Emily Harvey**, co-legal director of DLC. “But we can’t ignore the damage already done. For months, students facing discrimination were stranded — their complaints unresolved, their right to education compromised.”

The Office for Civil Rights closed seven of its 12 regional offices in March, increasing an already long backlog. Since then, the department has been spending \$1 million per week for staff members to sit idle.

“Students have already endured discrimination, harassment, and unlawful exclusion from school,” Harvey said. “Firing and rehiring federal employees doesn’t just hurt the staff — it compounds harm to children who need protections the most.”

DLC was one of the first organizations in Colorado to sound the alarm, warning state legislators about the impact of federal cuts. The agency’s leaders said they would redouble their efforts to protect students with disabilities — including a drive to strengthen state civil rights laws in 2026.

“This is good news — for now,” said DLC Executive Director **Andrew Romanoff**. “But let’s be clear: this administration has shown no sign of ending its assault on the most vulnerable Americans. We should be equally persistent in defending them.”

Contact Communications Manager **Felix Ortiz** to schedule an interview with Emily Harvey.

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Disability Law Colorado is a nonprofit civil rights organization, authorized by federal law to combat discrimination, abuse, and neglect. We aim to make Colorado the best place in America for people with disabilities to thrive. For more information, visit disabilitylawco.org.