Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation

℅ Elisa Cafferata, Director

(Street Address)

City, State, ZIP Code

Dear Ms. Cafferata:

I write you today as Chair of the Legislative Subcommittee of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). In this role, I both personally propose and entertain topic proposals from others, which allow me to draw upon my 10+ years of experience as not only a client of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), but also the nephew of an aunt with a lifelong visual disability.

In recent months, it has come to my attention that the Bureau’s Web site may be inaccessible to persons who are blind or visually impaired. Said challenging conduct may violate Titles II and/or III of the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), which prohibits discrimination by state and local governments, including their technological presence, which courts have consistently held to qualify as a public accommodation.

Understandably, the Department’s technological resources have been unexpectedly consternated during this most recent fiscal year, as well as the present one, in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. However, the potential inaccessibility within the present technologically-heavy landscape to programs which focus on obtaining and maintaining employment for persons with disabilities, including those who are blind and visually impaired, is paradoxical nonetheless. As such, the Committee respectfully requests that this become the Department’s technological priority #2 during the present fiscal year, such that the program and its technological presence become compliant with Titles II and/or III as soon as prudently possible.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you soon. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have.

Respectfully,

Steven Cohen

SILC Legislative Subcommittee Chair

CC: Jenny Casselman, Deputy Director

CC: Shelley Hendren, Administrator

CC: Mechelle Merrill, Deputy Administrator

CC: Sheena Childers, Bureau Chief

CC: Robert Whitney, Deputy Attorney General