



WASHINGTON CIVIL RIGHTS COUNCIL

Legal Action Packet

Version 1, April 2021

This packet provides help with taking legal action against discriminatory businesses. It is meant to be used as a followup to the <u>Mask-Free Shopping Guide</u> if communication breaks down. Both .pdf and .docx versions of this file are available at <u>truthark.org/legal</u>.

If you have feedback or need any informal advice, please email WCRC@protonmail.com. We would love to hear about your experiences!

We strongly recommend also looking at the <u>Overview of Medical Discrimination Law</u> and <u>Overview of Mask Medical Exemptions</u> documents if you are considering taking legal action.

Nothing in this packet is meant to constitute legal advice or replace the services of a trained legal professional.

Table of Contents

- I. <u>Overview of the Legal Process</u>
 - A. <u>What's a Letter of Demand?</u>
 - B. <u>What's an Affidavit?</u>
- II. <u>Guidance on Going to Court</u>
 - A. Do I have a case?
 - B. Do I need an attorney?
 - C. <u>Which type of court?</u>
 - D. <u>How do I file?</u>
 - E. <u>What should I take to court?</u>

- F. What should I say in court?
- G. What if I don't have a medical exemption?
- H. Can I dismiss a claim?
- I. <u>Am I open to counterclaims?</u>
- J. <u>Harassment vs Discrimination</u>
- III. Instructions For the Legal Documents
 - A. <u>Customizing the Documents</u>
 - B. <u>Mailing the Documents</u>
 - C. <u>Handling Responses</u>
- IV. <u>First Notice Letter of Demand</u>
- V. <u>Second Notice Affidavit / Declaration of Truth</u>

Overview of the Legal Process

This packet provides customizable templates for two legal documents, a Letter of Demand and an affidavit, instructions on how to customize and mail them, and guidance on going to court. The general process is as follows:

- 1. Send a letter of demand notifying the store of your complaint and requesting damages.
- 2. If the discriminator doesn't completely rebut your letter of demand (or didn't respond), you can send an affidavit.
- 3. If the discriminator doesn't completely rebut your affidavit (or didn't respond), you can choose to go to court if you want.
- 4. In court an unrebutted affidavit stands as fact, meaning the opposition didn't contest your evidence. This gives you an advantageous position.
- 5. At any time in this process you choose to negotiate, pause, or abandon the endeavor.

Steps 3-5 build on one another so you must do them in order in that order (if you choose to do all three), however you can stop at any time. You don't have to send an affidavit just because you sent a Letter of Demand, and you don't have to go to court just because you sent an affidavit.

Similarly, just because you file paperwork doesn't always mean you have to go to trial. Sometimes the threat of a trial is all it takes to get a defendant to settle. Delivery of a certified sworn statement attesting to discrimination and citing numerous laws can also force a business to take you seriously.

What's a Letter of Demand?

A <u>Letter of Demand</u> is written at the beginning of the process of bringing a case to court. Plaintiffs write demand letters to state the harm that has been caused by the defendant, what relief the defendant wants, and that they intend to take the case to court. You do not have to go to court just because you sent the letter, it is only a statement of fact and intent.

What's an Affidavit?

An <u>affidavit</u> is a voluntary, sworn statement made under oath. Once signed, witnessed, and notarized, the document is legally binding and the person signing is subject to being charged with perjury if the affidavit contains false information.

From the State's Citizen's Guide to Washington Courts:

"Decisions are based upon a preponderance of evidence. The party suing (plaintiff) must prove his or her case by presenting evidence that is more persuading to the trier of fact (judge or jury) than the opposing evidence."

Your Affidavit is notarized and sworn under oath, so it is an acknowledged document and <u>self-authenticating</u>. In other words, in court you don't have to prove the statements in your Affidavit are true. They are already accepted as true.

If the other party didn't rebut your Affidavit, that means they have implicitly agreed to your claims and there is nothing to argue about because they didn't contest your evidence. **An unrebutted affidavit stands as fact in a court of law**, giving you a powerful tool.

If they DO try to suddenly rebut your Affidavit when they didn't before, you have another tool on your side: <u>estoppel</u> by <u>acquiescence</u>. Defined as:

"When one person has, by his declaration, act or omission, intentionally caused or permitted another person to believe a thing to be true and to act upon such belief, neither he nor his representative shall be allowed... to deny the truth of that thing."

If they did not deny the truth of your allegations previously they cannot suddenly begin to deny them now. Thus the court is not in position to hear arguments over the facts in your Affidavit. You can read <u>more about estoppel here</u>.

Guidance on Going to Court

Remember that the court is here to serve you! Do not hesitate to call the court to ask about procedures or how to file, it is their job to help you. They cannot give legal advice, however.

Do I have a case?

If the defendant has clearly broken the law then yes, you likely have a case and can try to request an <u>injunction</u>. If you are going to ask for monetary damages you have to PROVE that you deserve them. For example if you have an important business meeting with a client who has already sent you a string of correspondence expressing their interest in hiring you and a letter of intent to sign a contract with you for a specific dollar amount or time period, and because of the discrimination/incident you had to miss the meeting and lost the potential client. You can't just claim arbitrary pain and suffering without medical evaluation and evidence, and you will likely need to prove your exemption/disability, be it medical or religious.

Do I need an attorney?

You might want to engage an attorney any time you go to District or Superior court, but it is not strictly necessary. Even if the attorney doesn't represent you in court it can be valuable to consult with them about your case.

Attorneys are forbidden in Small Claims court; all participants must represent themselves.

Which type of court?

You most likely want to file in Superior Court.

There are three types of court in which citizens can file, and the State provides guides explaining how to represent yourself in each: <u>Small Claims</u>, <u>District</u>, and <u>Superior</u>. Superior has the broadest <u>jurisdiction</u>, followed by District, and then Small Claims has the least.

Only Superior Court can grant an <u>injunction</u> or award damages, and is likely the only court to hear discrimination claims.

District court can grant a restraining order for harassment (but not damages), and Small Claims can only order moneys paid which are already owed (like when a tenant doesn't pay rent).

How do I file?

Don't sweat the details! If you are representing yourself the judge or clerk will likely give you a lot of leeway and help you out if you've done something incorrectly.

- If you are serving a store owner or manager, use the business address.
- The list of filing forms is available <u>here</u>. Simply download the forms for a Superior Court civil case from the top section and fill them out.
- In general, the claim must be filed in the court of the county in which the defendant(s) reside. Exceptions and specific rules can be found at <u>RCW 3.66.040</u>. <u>Choose a court</u> and go to their website for more instructions on where and how to file.
- If the court is requiring you to wear a mask and you cannot or need another form of medical or disability accommodation, you can <u>request an accommodation</u>.
- If you cannot afford the filing fees, you can <u>request a waiver</u>. Otherwise fees will vary by court and type of filing. The fee schedule is defined in <u>RCW 3.62.060</u> and broken down in a table <u>here</u>.
- <u>WashingtonLawHelp.org</u> provides assistance with filling out forms and helpful FAQ type information.

What should I take to court?

Take with you printed copies of any information you have provided to the defendant including copies of your Letter of Demand and Affidavit as well as the Certified Mail proof of receipt. Also bring copies of any communications from the defendant and any recordings of the incident or notes you wrote about the incident.

Present all of this information to the judge when it is appropriate to do so.

You may wish to take copies of the <u>Overview of Medical Discrimination Law</u> and <u>Overview of Mask Medical Exemptions</u> for reference.

What should I say in court?

You may wish to give a verbal retelling of the incident while presenting your evidence, then answer any questions the judge has.

Request default judgment for the relief you requested in your affidavit because the defendant did not adequately rebut your claims (or didn't rebut them at all). Here is an example statement you could make:

"Your Honor, here are not one but two affidavits with facts and law laid out that were sent to the defendant via certified mail with proof of receipt. Despite an explicit request for response, the affidavits have gone unrebutted and as such stand as fact. Your Honor, I am invoking Estoppel of Acquiescence. Since there is no controversy for the court to hear due to our opponents' prior admissions, I am requesting default judgment, granting the relief sought from the defendant."

What if I don't have a medical exemption?

In superior court you will likely be required to prove you have a qualifying exemption.

Can I dismiss a claim?

Yes, there are <u>numerous rules around when a claim can be dismissed</u>, however you can dismiss a claim yourself at any time before making your opening statement during your court appearance.

Am I open to counterclaims?

If your claim is spurious, then potentially yes. You can read about <u>the rules for counterclaims</u> <u>here</u>.

Harassment vs Discrimination

Discrimination is the more effective claim because it can be brought against a business and allow you to request an injunction, forcing the business to change their policy. The below templates are written for a discrimination claim.

<u>Harassment</u> is a more straightforward claim, but can only be brought against an individual, not a business. Furthermore, getting a restraining order or other typical anti-harassment action will likely not change a store's policy, and you will also effectively bar yourself from entering that establishment because you would be self-violating the restraining order. The store would also likely disavow that employee rather than change their policy.

Instructions For the Legal Documents

These instructions are for both the Letter of Demand and Affidavit templates. Although they have very similar text, they have different legal purposes (see sections above).

Customizing the Documents

- 1. Fill in your own information where indicated by [brackets and bold face type].
- 2. Replace the sample text provided in **orange**. Tailor your testimony to illustrate that the discriminator specifically broke <u>the law</u>, but <u>don't make legal conclusions in your</u> <u>documents, just state the facts</u>. Don't say "they broke xyz law," or "they committed discrimination," say "I told them about my condition but they said they still wouldn't serve me."
- 3. Be sure to
- 4. Perform additional customization as needed.
- 5. Be sure to remove any remaining **bold** or **orange** text or brackets.
- 6. Optional Send a copy to the recipient's supervisor or business owner (see below)

Mailing the Documents

- 1. Get the document **<u>notarized</u>**. It MUST be notarized to hold legal weight. The price for a notary is typically under \$20.00 and you can get documents notarized at most UPS or FEDEX store locations, then mail them at the same time. It's a good idea to call ahead to confirm there will be a notary on hand.
- 2. Send the document via <u>certified</u> mail, return receipt requested service. Track the date of delivery receipt to see if you receive a response from the other party within the timeframe specified. <u>Keep a copy for yourself</u>.

If you don't want to use your home address, you are welcome to use:

Your Name c/o Washington Civil Rights Council P.O. Box 0051 Edmonds WA 98020

If you use the address above, you **must** notify the PO Box Manager: <u>WCRC@protonmail.com</u>.

Handling Responses

Both the Letter of Demand & Affidavit include a request for the recipient to rebut every single point with which they disagree. They must specifically address every allegation. If someone only partially rebuts the allegations or writes down blatantly unrelated or untrue information, that is a non-response.

Save everything in case you go to court. <u>Always keep a copy for yourself</u>. Feel free to negotiate or settle out of court if they make a reasonable offer.

First Notice – Letter of Demand

[Date]

[Name and Title of Recipient] [Business Name] [Business/Mailing Street Address] [Business/Mailing City, State, ZIP]

Re: Incident of [Discrimination/Harassment] on [Date of incident]

Dear [Name of Recipient],

This letter is lawful notification to you, pursuant to the United States Constitution, in particular, the First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments, and Article 1 of the Washington State Constitution, in particular, Sections 1, 2, 3, 8, and 11, and requires your written response to me specific to the subject matter. Your failure to respond, within 15 calendar days, as stipulated, and to rebut, with particularity, everything in this letter with which you disagree is your lawful, legal and binding agreement with and admission to the fact that everything stated in this letter is true, correct, legal, lawful and binding upon you, in any court, anywhere in America, without your protest or objection or that of those who represent you. Your silence is your acquiescence. See: U.S. v. Tweel, 550 F. 2d. 297. "Silence can only be equated with fraud where there is a legal or moral duty to speak or where an inquiry left unanswered would be intentionally misleading."

I. INCIDENT REPORT:

I, [Your name], am exempt from mask wearing on [medical and/or religious grounds]. [State further explanation-optional].

[Full description of incident. Please replace the below sample text. Include date, time, events, witnesses. Feel free to mention that you are in possession of additional evidence to the facts, such as a video]

--EXAMPLE (please remove)--

I, Clark Kent, am exempt from mask wearing on medical and/or religious grounds. I do not wear facial coverings because they cause me a feeling of difficulty breathing, followed by anxiety and elevated blood pressure. I find masks (facial coverings) to be directly detrimental to my health.

On November 6th, 2020 at 12.51PM, I waited outside the Gotham Coffee shop without mask, until I was invited in by a "wave-in" gesture from a pleasant staff member behind the register counter. I approached the counter (unmasked) and placed my initial order for tea. I then proceeded to wait for my order and the rest of my party to arrive. After a few minutes, I was approached by Lex, the owner of Gotham Coffee and was told to "either wear a mask or leave." I responded that "I had been coming each of the last 3 Fridays with my group without a mask because of the fact that I could not wear a mask and that I had an exemption as recognized by the State of Washington." Lex continued to demand that I leave because I was not following his coffee shop policy. He stated that his policy was that "masks need to be worn upon entry, to order and get to the table and only once at the table could someone eat or drink without a mask on. I responded "I'm here at the table standing and I can just sit down and remain unmasked." Lex looked frustrated and told me once again to leave. He then went to the register, took out the money I had paid, handed the money to me and gave me an order to "Leave Now." I told Lex was breaking the law by refusing me

service and then proceeded to leave immediately after. Lex was very hostile toward me and I felt harassed, apprehensive and tense from this interaction. --EXAMPLE (please remove)--

II. DISCRIMINATION LAW

- 1. **The Health Order regarding masks provides for exemptions**. WA State Secretary of Health, John Wiesman, issued a Statewide Order 20-03 regarding Face Coverings, recommending their use for persons when in public settings. This same Health Order includes exemptions for *"persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering."*
- 2. The Governor does not oblige businesses to enforce masks for the exempt. "Overview of COVID-19 Statewide Face Covering Requirements" a document published by the Office of the Governor further confirms that those unable to wear masks should not be forced to do so. The document states "Businesses must demonstrate a good-faith effort to require the use of face coverings by customers and visitors. The governor's proclamation does not oblige businesses to enforce the use of face coverings by individuals who are exempt from the health order... If the customer indicates they are exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability that prevents them from wearing a mask, the governor's proclamation does not require that any additional steps be taken to enforce the face covering requirement for that individual."
- 3. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations. ADA Section 36.104 defines a public accommodation: "Place of public accommodation means a facility, operated by a private entity, whose operations affect commerce" and fall within at least one of a long list of inclusive categories. ADA Section 36.201 then explicitly prohibits discrimination against those with disabilities: "No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any private entity who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation."
- 4. Washington State Law secures the right to be free from discrimination. Washington State RCW 49.60.030, guarantees its citizens the right to be free from discrimination because of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, among other factors, or the "the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability..." RCW 49.60.030 echoes the provisions of the ADA regarding non-discrimination in places of public accommodation, confirming one's "right to the full enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges of any place of public resort, accommodation, assemblage, or amusement."
- 5. Lawful implementation of mask policy toward customers is at the discretion of each business. The Department of Health, on its "Masks FAQ" page, states that "<u>the Governor's proclamation</u> <u>requiring masks inside of businesses is enforced by those businesses</u>." Businesses are not compelled to turn away exempt customers, in fact they are expected to follow federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination toward those with disabilities. This means that a discriminatory policy - to deny entry or service to, harass, or intimidate customers that are exempt from mask wearing – is entirely the choice of the business that has implemented it; the business bears full legal liability arising from enforcement of such unlawful policy.
- 6. Individuals may not be deemed a direct threat solely due to absence of mask. Title III of the ADA states that public accommodations are not required to provide access to goods and services if someone is a direct threat. But someone cannot be deemed a direct threat based solely on an assumption and lacking direct evidence. Specifically ADA Section 36.208 states "In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others. a public accommodation must make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current

medical knowledge." A blanket policy that regards all mask-free persons as a threat is a global assumption that does not meet burden of proof of an individualized assessment based on concrete medical knowledge about the individual. It also violates the "probable cause" provision of the 4th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

- 7. Members of the public cannot be blocked or detained at a place of public accommodation without due cause. RCW 9A.46.020 defines harassment as, among other things, to subject a person to "physical confinement or restraint or...maliciously to do any other act which is intended to substantially harm the person threatened...with respect to his or her physical or mental health or safety." Harassment is a criminal offense in Washington State punishable by up to year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$5,000, in addition to opening up civil liabilities.
- 8. No emergency suspends the law. The current State of Emergency in Washington State does not suspend civil liberties. A recent ruling from the U.S District court judge, William S. Stickman (September 14, 2020) re-affirmed that a State of Emergency does not suspend our Constitutional rights, such as our 4th and 14th Amendment rights. "Even in an emergency, the authority of government is not unfettered. The Constitution cannot accept the concept of a 'new normal' where the basic liberties of the people can be subordinated to open-ended emergency mitigation measures." U.S. District Court Judge William S. Stickman (Sept 14, 2020).

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the facts presented in sections 1 through 8 above, **[Name of Recipient]** acted unlawfully on **[Date of incident]** when **[he/she]** forced me to leave **[Name of Business]**. Physical and mental health issues may prevent individuals from wearing a mask and this is a type of 'reverse' disability. Despite the Health Secretary's Order providing for exemptions and the Governor's guidance stating that businesses need not insist on masks for those unable to wear them, **[Name of Recipient]** enforced a policy that denies service to exempt individuals. In doing so **[he/she]** honored only the recommendation for masks but not the Federal and State requirements for non-discrimination against those with disabilities. The decision to discriminate rests entirely on **[Name of Recipient]** as the Department of health makes it clear that actual enforcement of masking policy toward customers is up to the discretion of each business. No actual effort was made by **[Name of Recipient]** to make an individualized assessment of me based on concrete medical evidence to determine if I was in fact a direct threat to him or others. A state of emergency does not suspend existing non-discrimination laws that exist precisely to protect individuals from unfair and unequal treatment simply because "they look scary."

Discrimination based on race is widely understood today to be inappropriate and unlawful, but at one time was common because some people were perceived as "threatening" simply based on their skin color. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended racial discrimination, setting clear precedent that fear alone, lacking any concrete evidence of threat, is not valid basis for disparate treatment. On the day of the incident, I was healthy and symptom-free and there was no evidence that I posed imminent risk of infection to any employees or customers of [**Business Name]**. I was perceived as 'threatening' based on fear, a blanket stereotype. No legally required accommodation was provided for my disability. My rights have been violated and I believe I am the victim of **[harassment and/or discrimination]**.

IV. CLAIM FOR DAMAGES AND OFFER TO COMPROMISE

As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned incident, I have suffered the following damages and losses:

a. [Loss of business revenue]

--EXAMPLE (please remove)--

A meeting with a potential client, Acme Industries, that was scheduled to take place at Gotham Coffee that afternoon on November 6th did not happen resulting in loss of my ability to finish negotiations to deliver services, interrupting my ability to earn a livelihood. I have worked with Acme before and they had already delivered to me a letter of intent to contract my services for a 3 month period, amounting to a total value of \$30,000. They stated they no longer wished to pursue the contract because I missed the meeting.

Based on the damages and facts presented above, I believe the below compensation and business action would be a fair and just settlement to conclude this case at this point and time for both parties. Please respond within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of this document.

- [Optional Monetary damages]
- Cease [discrimination and/or harassment] against exempt individuals by the business and its employees

If you disagree with anything in this letter, then rebut that with which you disagree, in writing, with particularity, to me, within fifteen (15) calendar days, and support your disagreement with evidence, fact and law. Your failure to respond, as stipulated, is your agreement with and admission to the fact that everything in this letter is true, correct, legal, lawful, and is your irrevocable agreement attesting to this, fully binding upon you, in any court in America, without your protest or objection or that of those who represent you.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct:

[Date and Place]

[Your Full Name--sign printed copies]

Mailing Address for Response: [Your Address or WCRC PO Box [Your Email-optional]

Notary Statement

In the State of Washington

County of _____

I swear that on this _____ day of _____[Month], the above named Affiant/Declarant, _____, appeared before me, and, of his own free will, signed this Letter of Demand.

Notary Public

Seal:

My Commission	Expires:
---------------	----------

Date:

Second Notice – Affidavit / Declaration of Truth

[Date]

[Name and Title of Recipient] [Business Name] [Business/Mailing Street Address] [Business/Mailing City, State, ZIP]

Re: Incident of [Discrimination/Harassment] on [Date of incident]

Dear [Name of Recipient],

On **[Date of First Notice**], a Letter of Demand was sent to you with specific claims and charges inviting your rebuttal within fifteen (15) calendar days. You have failed to rebut the charges, with particularity and specificity, within the allotted time period. This is your second and final notice.

I, **[Your name]**, the undersigned, make this Affidavit/Declaration of Truth of my own free will, and I hereby affirm, declare and swear, under my oath and under the pains and penalties of perjury under the laws of the United States of America and of this state, that I am of legal age and of sound mind and hereby attest that the statements, averments and information contained in this Affidavit/Declaration are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

This letter is second lawful notification to you, pursuant to the United States Constitution, in particular, the First, Fourth, Fifth, Ninth, and Fourteenth Amendments, and Article 1 of the Washington State Constitution, in particular, Sections 1, 2, 3, 8, and 11, and requires your written response to me specific to the subject matter. Your failure to respond, within 15 calendar days, as stipulated, and to rebut, with particularity, everything in this letter with which you disagree is your lawful, legal and binding agreement with and admission to the fact that everything stated in this letter is true, correct, legal, lawful and binding upon you, in any court, anywhere in America, without your protest or objection or that of those who represent you. Your silence is your acquiescence. See: U.S. v. Tweel, 550 F. 2d. 297. "Silence can only be equated with fraud where there is a legal or moral duty to speak or where an inquiry left unanswered would be intentionally misleading."

I. INCIDENT REPORT:

I, [Your name], am exempt from mask wearing on [medical and/or religious grounds]. [State further explanation-optional].

[Full description of incident. Please replace below sample text. Include date, time, events, witnesses. Feel free to mention that you are in possession of additional evidence to the facts, such as a video]

--EXAMPLE (please remove)--

I, Clark Kent, am exempt from mask wearing on medical and religious grounds. I do not wear facial coverings because they cause me a feeling of difficulty breathing, followed by anxiety and elevated blood pressure. I find masks (facial coverings) to be directly detrimental to my health.

On November 6th, 2020 at 12.51PM, I waited outside the Gotham Coffee shop without mask, until I was invited in by a "wave-in" gesture from a pleasant staff member behind the register counter. I approached the counter (unmasked) and placed my initial order for tea. I then proceeded to wait for my order and the rest of my party to arrive. After a few minutes, I was approached by Lex, the owner of Gotham Coffee and was told to "either wear a mask or leave." I responded that "I had been coming each of the last 3 Fridays with my group without a mask because of the fact that I could not wear a mask and that I had an exemption as recognized by the State of Washington." Lex continued to demand that I leave because I was not following his coffee shop policy. He stated that his policy was that "masks need to be worn upon entry, to order and get to the table and only once at the table could someone eat or drink without a mask on. I responded "I'm here at the table standing and I can just sit down and remain unmasked." Lex looked frustrated and told me once again to leave. He then went to the register, took out the money I had paid, handed the money to me and gave me an order to "Leave Now." I told Lex was breaking the law by refusing me service and then proceeded to leave immediately after. Lex was very hostile toward me and I felt harassed, apprehensive and tense from this interaction.

--EXAMPLE (please remove)--

II. DISCRIMINATION LAW

- 1. **The Health Order regarding masks provides for exemptions**. WA State Secretary of Health, John Wiesman, issued a Statewide Order 20-03 regarding Face Coverings, recommending their use for persons when in public settings. This same Health Order includes exemptions for *"persons with a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability that prevents wearing a face covering."*
- 2. The Governor does not oblige businesses to enforce masks for the exempt. "Overview of COVID-19 Statewide Face Covering Requirements" a document published by the Office of the Governor further confirms that those unable to wear masks should not be forced to do so. The document states "Businesses must demonstrate a good-faith effort to require the use of face coverings by customers and visitors. The governor's proclamation does not oblige businesses to enforce the use of face coverings by individuals who are exempt from the health order... If the customer indicates they are exempt from the requirement to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability that prevents them from wearing a mask, the governor's proclamation does not require that any additional steps be taken to enforce the face covering requirement for that individual."
- 3. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations. ADA Section 36.104 defines a public accommodation: "Place of public accommodation means a facility, operated by a private entity, whose operations affect commerce" and fall within at least one of a long list of inclusive categories. ADA Section 36.201 then explicitly prohibits discrimination against those with disabilities: "No individual shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of public accommodation by any private entity who owns, leases (or leases to), or operates a place of public accommodation."
- 4. Washington State Law secures the right to be free from discrimination. Washington State RCW 49.60.030, guarantees its citizens the right to be free from discrimination because of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, among other factors, or the "<u>the presence of any sensory. mental.</u> <u>or physical disability</u>..." RCW 49.60.030 echoes the provisions of the ADA regarding non-discrimination in places of public accommodation, confirming one's "<u>right to the full</u> <u>enjoyment of any of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, or privileges of any place of public resort, accommodation, assemblage, or amusement.</u>"
- Lawful implementation of mask policy toward customers is at the discretion of each business. The Department of Health, on its website, states that "<u>the Governor's proclamation</u> requiring masks inside of businesses is enforced by those businesses." Businesses are not

compelled to turn away exempt customers, in fact they are expected to follow federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination toward those with disabilities. This means that a discriminatory policy - to deny entry or service to, harass, or intimidate customers that are exempt from mask wearing – is entirely the choice of the business that has implemented it; the business bears full legal liability arising from enforcement of such unlawful policy.

- 6. Individuals may not be deemed a direct threat solely due to absence of mask. Title III of the ADA states that public accommodations are not required to provide access to goods and services if someone is a direct threat. But someone cannot be deemed a direct threat based solely on an assumption and lacking direct evidence. Specifically ADA Section 36.208 states "In determining whether an individual poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, a public accommodation must make an individualized assessment, based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge." A blanket policy that regards all mask-free persons as a threat is a global assumption that does not meet burden of proof of an individualized assessment based on concrete medical knowledge about the individual. It also violates the "probable cause" provision of the 4th Amendment of the United States Constitution.
- 7. Members of the public cannot be blocked or detained at a place of public accommodation without due cause. RCW 9A.46.020 defines harassment as, among other things, to subject a person to "<u>physical confinement or restraint</u> or...maliciously to do any other act which is intended to substantially harm the person threatened...with respect to his or her physical or mental health or safety." Harassment is a criminal offense in Washington State punishable by up to year in jail and/or a fine of up to \$5,000, in addition to opening up civil liabilities.
- 8. No emergency suspends the law. The current State of Emergency in Washington State does not suspend civil liberties. A recent ruling from the U.S District court judge, William S. Stickman (September 14, 2020) re-affirmed that a State of Emergency does not suspend our Constitutional rights, such as our 4th and 14th Amendment rights. "Even in an emergency, the authority of the government is not unfettered. The Constitution cannot accept the concept of a 'new normal' where the basic liberties of the people can be subordinated to open-ended emergency mitigation measures." U.S. District Court Judge William S. Stickman (Sept 14, 2020).

III. CONCLUSION

Based on the facts presented in sections 1 through 8 above, **[Name of Recipient]** acted unlawfully on **[Date of incident]** when **[he/she]** forced me to leave **[Name of Business]**. Physical and mental health issues may prevent individuals from wearing a mask and this is a type of 'reverse' disability. Despite the Health Secretary's Order providing for exemptions and the Governor's guidance stating that businesses need not insist on masks for those unable to wear them, **[Name of Recipient]** enforced a policy that denies service to exempt individuals. In doing so **[he/she]** honored only the recommendation for masks but not the Federal and State requirements for non-discrimination against those with disabilities. The decision to discriminate rests entirely on **[Name of Recipient]** as the Department of health makes it clear that actual enforcement of masking policy toward customers is up to the discretion of each business. No actual effort was made by **[Name of Recipient]** to make an individualized assessment of me based on concrete medical evidence to determine if I was in fact a direct threat to him or others. A state of emergency does not suspend existing non-discrimination laws that exist precisely to protect individuals from unfair and unequal treatment simply because "they look scary."

Discrimination based on race is widely understood today to be inappropriate and unlawful, but at one time was common because some people were perceived as "threatening" simply based on their skin color. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 ended racial discrimination, setting clear precedent that fear alone, lacking any concrete evidence of threat, is not valid basis for disparate treatment. On the day of the incident, I was healthy and symptom-free and there was no evidence that I posed imminent risk of infection to any

employees or customers of [**Business Name**]. I was perceived as 'threatening' based on fear, a blanket stereotype. No legally required accommodation was provided for my disability. My rights have been violated and I believe I am the victim of **[harassment and/or discrimination]**.

IV. CLAIM FOR DAMAGES AND OFFER TO COMPROMISE

As a direct and proximate result of the aforementioned incident, I have suffered the following damages and losses: **[Use or omit a, b, c, or d below, or add your own.]**

a. [Loss of business revenue]

--EXAMPLE (please remove)--

A meeting with a potential client, Acme Industries, that was scheduled to take place at Gotham Coffee that afternoon on November 6th did not happen resulting in loss of my ability to finish negotiations to deliver services, interrupting my ability to earn a livelihood. I have worked with Acme before and they had already delivered to me a letter of intent to contract my services for a 3 month period, amounting to a total value of \$30,000. They stated they no longer wished to pursue the contract because I missed the meeting.

Based on the damages and facts presented above, I believe the below compensation and business action would be a fair and just settlement to conclude this case at this point and time for both parties. Please respond within fifteen (15) calendar days of receipt of this document.

- [Optional Monetary damages]
- Cease [discrimination and/or harassment] against exempt individuals by the business and its employees

I. LAWFUL NOTIFICATION

Lawful notification has been provided to you stating that if you do not rebut the statements, charges and averments made in this Affidavit, then you tacitly agree with and admit to them.

Pursuant to that lawful notification, if you disagree with anything stated under oath in this Affidavit/Declaration of Truth, then rebut to me that with which you disagree, with particularity, within fifteen (15) days of receipt thereof, by means of your own written, notarized affidavit of truth, based in specific, true, relevant fact and valid law to support your disagreement,

Your failure to respond, as stipulated, in kind and in full, with specificity, is your agreement with and admission to the fact that everything in this Affidavit/Declaration of Truth is true, correct, legal, lawful, and is your irrevocable admission attesting to this, fully binding upon you in any court of law in America, without your protest, objection and that of those who represent you. An unrebutted Affidavit stands as truth and fact before the court.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the foregoing is true and correct:

[Date and Place]

[Your Full Name--sign printed copies]

Mailing Address for Response: [Your Address or WCRC PO Box] [Your Email-optional]

Notary Statement

In the State of Washington

County of _____

I swear that on this _____ day of _____**[Month]**, the above named Affiant/Declarant,

_____, appeared before me, and, of his own free will, signed this Affidavit/Declaration

of Truth.

Notary Public

Seal:

My Commission Expires:	Date:
------------------------	-------