

# Study shows the rights of people with disabilities are not being promoted

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Historic legal rulings did not protect the rights of persons with disabilities, while legal rulings concerned with race or gender provided much more protection of individual rights and freedoms according to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Queen's University PhD student Christopher A. Riddle has determined in a recent study.

"The motivation for this examination came from the very simple observation that the rights of persons with disabilities were not being promoted through the very mechanisms designed to ensure justice for everyone," says the study's author.

Section 15 of the Charter states "that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination." Mr. Riddle came to his conclusion of unequal treatment after examining a number of historic legal cases between 1986 and 2004 that showed [prejudice](#) against people with disabilities.

More specifically, the ideal of [equality](#) was found to have been interpreted in numerous different manners, across the various cases.

The next step will be to develop a clearer understanding of what it is about equality that excludes people with disabilities, so that researchers can begin to address and incorporate people with disabilities into the existing struggles for [social justice](#).

Mr. Riddle is currently a lecturer at Concordia University. The paper was published recently in *Disability Studies Quarterly*.

Provided by Queen's University

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