

# Disability rights groups file a federal complaint against Connecticut for

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Ted S. Warren / AP

Two Connecticut civil rights organizations have filed federal complaints against the state over the way COVID-19 at-home test kits and masks are being distributed.

Sheldon Toubman, an attorney for Disability Rights CT, said the state violated federal anti-discrimination laws.

“The concern is that it has been done in a way which does not prioritize people who are disabled and who are at high risk,” Toubman said.

Governor Ned Lamont had said towns and cities should prioritize distribution to vulnerable populations. But Toubman said Lamont later undercut that same guidance

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by allowing municipalities to have “discretion to develop the distribution model that best fits their community.”

Toubman said the Lamont administration is willing to meet with his disability group and the Connecticut Legal Rights Project in the coming weeks. Still, he said he is skeptical if people with disabilities who are vulnerable to the virus will get the care they need before the next wave of at-home tests and masks are distributed statewide.

He wants Connecticut to impose a statewide mask mandate. Lamont has said he wants to leave that up to local communities to decide. Several of Connecticut municipalities have also joined in the groups’ call to action.

“Obviously in Connecticut all we had was a requirement that the unvaccinated wear masks in public places and that’s completely unenforceable, you can’t tell,” Toubman said. “So, given that and given the fact people who are vaccinated also are now transmitting Omicron, it seems clear that the governor’s of Rhode Island and New York were right in acting a while ago as Omicron first hit.”

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## Brian Scott-Smith

An award-winning freelance reporter/host for WSHU, Brian lives in southeastern Connecticut and covers stories for WSHU across the Eastern side of the state.

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