

EMPLOYMENT LAW INTAKE SUMMARY for Jeffrey Levi

Case Type: Disability Discrimination / Failure to Accommodate / Wrongful Termination

NJLAD (New Jersey Law Against Discrimination) + ADA Basic Information:

Employee: Long-term public school district employee (Bergen County Special Services School District, NJ)

Length of employment: 22 years

Position: Instructional Technology specialist

Employment record: No disciplinary actions, no performance reviews during entire tenure

Disability: Left Leg Amputation Documented medical condition supported by treating physicians

Core Legal Issue: Employer failed to provide reasonable accommodation for a documented disability, ignored physician recommendations, failed to engage in an interactive process, and ultimately terminated employment.

Key Timeline: March 13, 2020 COVID Remote Work: March 13, 2020, at the request of administration I started working remotely during COVID-19, Successfully performed all job duties from home for three years

January 5, 2023: Received email from Director of technology Edmund Hayward requesting I come back to the office in person as the district no longer has a remote work policy. The only exception is a documented medical reason. I responded on January 5, 2023(Evidence Attached)

January 27, 202: First meeting via Zoom with Edmund Hayward and Gary Hall Director of Human resources: To discuss that there is no medical documentation supporting my request for a 504 14 years ago stating, "No medical documentation to support 504. I do not need those accommodations (Evidence Attached)

February 7, 2023: (Accommodation Request): Requested to continue remote work as a reasonable accommodation. This request is Supported by two separate treating physicians: Physicians provided written documentation stating remote work was medically beneficial to my health. Gary Hall Director of HR denied both doctors recommendations and asked for another letter requesting current inability to work (Evidence Attached)

February 10, 2023 Employer Denied Accommodation: Received email from Gary Hall Director of Human Resources denying my request to continue remote work. This request was in writing and supported by two separate physicians' letters. Their response: **"FULL TIME REMOTE WORK ASSIGNMENT ISN'T AVAILABEL TO YOU AS A REASONABLE ACCOMADATION."** If I don't return to on-site work on 5/23/2023 the district reserves the right to make decisions on my upcoming contract. Gary Hall wanted another letter from the doctors documenting my current inability to return to work. Dr. Bellavia and Dr. Larsen revised the letters to support the request for current inability to report to on-site work on 5/23/2023. (Evidence Attached)

No individualized assessment conducted
No alternative accommodation offered
No meaningful interactive process occurred

February 14, 2023: Both physicians said they would be happy to talk to Gary and answer all concerns he has. Gary's response "It's your responsibility to get the doctors letters, I don't call doctors." I explained all I had to go through being an amputee and expressing how this would help my quality of life improve.

February 14, 2023: Gary Hall director of HR denied these letters as well stating this medical note does not support my claim that I am unable to work on-site every day. Gary Hall states in this email I haven't provided adequate medical documentation supporting my request for remote work. (evidence Attached)

February 15, 2023: I went back to Dr. Bellavia and Dr Larsen to request another revision. This letter was to answer the questions Gary Hall Director of HR said, the previous letter didn't cover. Gary Hall Director of HR DENIED the acceptance of this letter and asked the letters revised yet again. In the end each doctor has written and revised the letter 3 different times in 5 days. In total I submitted 6 letters in total, requesting my accommodation to continue remote work. These letters were all denied saying the letter isn't acceptable and I must return to on-site work on May 23, 2023. (Evidence Attached)

MAY 1, 2023: Email from Gary Hall Director of HR stating I didn't meet the deadline of submitting doctors' letters (Evidence Attached)

May 4, 2023: Additional Letter from Dr. Larsen explain about an upcoming shoulder surgery showing I will have to work from home for the duration of my life despite the surgery. Evidence Attached)

May 18, 2023: Another letter from Dr. Larsen about not being able to drive to work and recommends working from home. This letter was also rejected. (Evidence Attached)

May 20,2023: Last letter from Dr. Bellavia states Hey Jeff, I am sorry the new documentation was not enough, I am not really sure what to do at this point, and I am not entirely convinced there is something that would ever be determined as being adequate. Sincerely, Dr. Bellavia (Evidence Attached)

Return to Office Requirement (May 2023): Required to return to on-site work despite unresolved accommodation request. I didn't have any other choice but return to on-site work despite all the doctors' recommendations. No updated accommodation review or alternatives provided.

Termination (May 2026): Employment terminated after 22 years of service No prior discipline or performance issues Termination occurred after unresolved accommodation dispute. Letter states They are restructuring the school district and aren't renewing my 2026-2027 contract. (Evidence Attached)

Legal Claims: Potential violations of: Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (NJLAD)

Legal Issues Include: Failure to provide reasonable accommodation
Blanket denial of accommodation (“No Policy for remote work available”)
Disability-related wrongful termination
Retaliation after accommodation request

Evidence Available: Six physician letters supporting accommodation request to continue to work from home after three years of success working from home, Emails from Gary Hall HR Director denying request for accommodation to continue to work from home, I requested Dr Larsen and Dr Bellavia to revise the letter and cover all of the requested parameters outlined by Gary Hall HR Director and when he wouldn’t accept the letters I had to go back to both doctors and request both doctors to revise it again because the HR Director Gary Hall wouldn’t accept the letter, I then requested the doctors to revise the letters for a third time, within a five day period and Gary Hall Denied those letters also. All documentation is attached documenting process and denial. Throughout my 22 years I have received many commendations from Howard Lerner Superintendent of Bergen County Special Services. As well as Emails from Assistant Superintendent and principals and teachers describing my dedication and support.

Damages: Loss of long-term employment (22 years) Lost wages and benefits
Emotional distress
Impact on retirement and pension timing

What Client Is Seeking: Legal representation on contingency basis preferred
Evaluation for NJLAD / ADA litigation
Negotiation or filing of discrimination/wrongful termination claim

Why This Case Is Strong: Long-term stable employment (22 years) Strong medical documentation (two physicians) Written denial of accommodation
Lack of interactive process
Clean employment record
Termination following accommodation dispute