

Initiative Launched to have Edentulism Recognized as a Disability in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Studies show 36+ million people in the United States are without teeth. This Change.org petition aims to give these people their entitled rights under the ADA.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, TX, UNITED STATES, August 6, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A new petition has been launched on [Change.org](https://www.change.org) urging U.S. policymakers to formally recognize edentulism—the condition of having no natural teeth—as a qualifying disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). With more than 36 million completely and partially edentulous Americans, advocates say it's time to end the silence and stigma surrounding tooth loss.



People should not be penalized for living with dentures.

"Edentulism profoundly affects people's ability to eat, speak, find employment, and live with dignity," says Dr. Dan Holtzclaw, a nationally recognized dental implant specialist and author of The Denture Wearer's [Handbook](#). "Yet the ADA offers no clear protection for these individuals. That has to change."

Despite meeting many of the requirements for protection under the ADA, edentulism is currently not a recognized and covered condition in the act. This condition affects more than 10% of the United States population and its lack of ADA inclusion puts many at risk for equal employment opportunities. Of the more than 36 million Americans affected by edentulism, many cannot afford treatment to correct this situation and ultimately experience numerous physical and emotional challenges that affect employment opportunities:

- * Difficulty chewing or speaking clearly
- * Chronic pain, physical limitations, or social embarrassment

- * Barriers to employment and workplace discrimination

- * Financial challenges accessing prosthetic care

These struggles impact nutrition, communication, self-confidence, and overall health—yet edentulism remains excluded from the ADA's list of recognized disabilities, leaving millions without the legal protections or accommodations they urgently need. Employment discrimination due to edentulism keeps many in a perpetual state of disenfranchisement. Without an adequate paying job, they cannot afford treatment for edentulism. Without treatment for edentulism, they cannot find an adequate paying job. ADA recognition of edentulism is one step to end this cycle.

In addition to helping affected individuals achieve a better life, inclusion of edentulism in the ADA will ultimately prove beneficial for employers. Edentulism treatment creates healthier employees who miss less work - creates more confident employees who have improved customer facing interactions - and creates happier employees more likely to retain employment.

The petition urges lawmakers and regulators to:

- * Amend or interpret ADA guidelines to explicitly include edentulism when it substantially limits major life activities.

- * Acknowledge the functional and medical impacts of tooth loss—not just its cosmetic implications.

- * Provide clearer guidance to employers, insurers, and healthcare systems on rights and accommodations for edentulous individuals.

Tooth Loss and Employment: A Hidden Barrier

Studies have shown that tooth loss can negatively influence employment by:

- * Damaging self-confidence and perceived professionalism

- * Affecting speech and interpersonal communication

- * Creating health-related work limitations

- * Contributing to social stigma and hiring discrimination

"It's Time to Treat Edentulism as the Disability It Is."

“People without teeth are often overlooked,” says Dr. Holtzclaw. “We must stop thinking of dentures as merely cosmetic and start acknowledging the real functional, medical, and psychological burden of edentulism.”

By updating ADA protections, the petition aims to promote dignity, inclusion, and fair access for one of the country’s most underserved populations.

Join the Movement

Visit the Change.org petition at:

<https://www.change.org/p/recognize-edentulism-being-without-teeth-as-a-protected-ada-disability>

For interviews or media inquiries, please contact:

info@holzklau.com

About Dr. Dan Holtzclaw:

Dr. Holtzclaw is a dual board-certified dental specialist and a former Chief Clinical Officer of one of the nation’s largest dental service organizations, overseeing 400+ clinics that specialize in denture and dental implant treatments. Dr. Holtzclaw has authored two of the best-selling [books](#) in the dental industry: 1) Remote Anchorage Solutions for Severe Maxillary Atrophy; 2) Pterygoid Dental Implants: The Art and Science.

Media Relations

Holzklau Full Arch Consulting

+1 512-222-9648

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