

Disability Rights Ohio Names New Executive Director

Advocacy group selects experienced veteran with track record of both leadership and success to fill top post

Columbus, Ohio—January 16, 2020—Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) has named Kerstin Sjoberg its new Executive Director. Sjoberg replaces Michael Kirkman who is retiring after almost 40 years of advocacy for people with disabilities. Sjoberg will assume the Executive Director role March 1, 2020. She has served as DRO's Director of Advocacy and Assistant Executive Director for the past seven years.

"My lifelong commitment to justice and civil rights, and my love for the organization makes this a position I am humbled and honored to accept," Sjoberg said. "As second in command, I have led the strategic vision for DRO's advocacy work. I recognize that each individual is important, and that, as an organization, we must work together to effectively balance helping people solve their daily problems with working to eliminate or prevent those problems through systemic legal and policy advocacy. I've witnessed the DRO team work tirelessly each and every day to meet these objectives. I welcome the opportunity to stand with them as we continue this critical work."

As DRO's Assistant Executive Director, Sjoberg has been actively engaged in the agency's administration and management, including financial planning, oversight and resource development. As its Director of Advocacy, she has expanded DRO's work in this realm by utilizing both class action lawsuits and public policy campaigns.

"Our search committee worked tirelessly to find the very best candidate to step into this role," explained Jennilee Mohler, DRO Board of Directors' President. "I am 100 percent confident that Kerstin Sjoberg is that person. She is recognized and respected both in Ohio and nationally as a leader in disability rights advocacy. And, she works collaboratively to get things done. She is the right person to lead DRO into the future."

Sjoberg has also served as an Adjunct Professor at the Moritz College of Law, The Ohio State University, and previously was an associate at Jones Day in Columbus. During her tenure at DRO she has successfully partnered with the Department of Justice on two major cases and is the lead attorney in the community integration class action lawsuit, *Ball vs. DeWine*. The preliminary settlement in that case will better inform Ohioans with development disabilities about their options for living and working in the community.

"There is no one better prepared to lead this agency than Kerstin," added Kirkman. "She is a respected leader within DRO and has an established rapport with the staff. She has the knowledge, skills and connections that are essential for this position and is ready to lead on Day One. I know DRO will continue to fulfill its mission, advocating for the human, civil, and legal rights of Ohioans with disabilities, at the highest level."

About DRO

Disability Rights Ohio is designated under federal law as the Protection and Advocacy System and Client Assistance Program for the state of Ohio. The mission of Disability Rights Ohio is to advocate for the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities in Ohio. Disability Rights Ohio provides legal advocacy and rights protection to a wide range of people with disabilities. Find more information at disabilityrightsohio.org.