Minutes

GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES BUSINESS MEETING

Monday April 4, 2005 5:00 – 7:00 PM

John O. Pastore Center (Formerly the Howard Center)

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Secretary:	Bob Cooper
Attendees:	Paul Choquette (Chair); John McDonald (Vice Chair); Rosemary Carmody; Binyamin Efreom; Dr. Kate McCarthy-Barnett; Ronald McMinn; Bill Nieranowski; James Pitassi; Arthur Plitt; Patricia Ryherd; Rev. Gerard Sabourin; Lou Salerno; & Dr. Victoria Wilcox
Excused:	Frederick Burke; Regina Connor; Joseph Corrente; Victoria Ferrara; Scott Greco; Joseph Guay; Mitchell Henderson; & Dr. Orestes Monteracy

Minutes

5:00 PM	**Call to Order, Introductions and Acceptance of Minutes**	**Paul Choquette, Chair.**

Discussion Chair called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Members, staff and guests introduce themselves

MOTION: To accept the minutes of the previous meeting as mailed RMcM/VW passed unanimously

5:05 PM	**Action Items - Commenting on Federal Legislation Concerning Services for People with Disabilities:**	**Victoria Wilcox, Legislation Committee Chair**

1) Medicaid Budget Cuts

March 15, 2005 Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Letter

Dear Senator:

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) strongly urges you to support the Smith-Bingaman amendment during floor consideration of the FY 2006 Budget Resolution. The Smith-Bingaman amendment will restore the $15 billion Medicaid cut that is assumed in the Budget Committee's reconciliation instruction and create a bipartisan commission to conduct a comprehensive review to determine how to improve service delivery and quality in the most cost-effective way possible under Medicaid.

CCD is a Washington-based coalition of national organizations that represent children and adults with disabilities and their families, service providers and advocates. The CCD is strongly supportive of the Medicaid program, which is the only source of appropriate health and long-term care services for nearly nine million children and adults with disabilities. It gives children with severe disabilities access to physical and occupational therapy so they can lead healthy and more active lives and continue to live at home with their families; and participate actively in the community in which they live. It provides essential supports so that adults with disabilities can live in the community where they belong instead of in inappropriate institutions. We believe that the individual entitlement to Medicaid – with its critical federal protections and the open-ended financing system, has contributed mightily to Medicaid's past successes.

Medicaid is the lynchpin for children and adults with disabilities to live with dignity and independence.

- Medicaid is the primary public source of funding for long-term services and supports for people with disabilities of all ages. Medicaid typically is the only source of funding to support people with disabilities in the community instead of in costly, inappropriate, and segregated nursing homes or institutions.
- For children with all types of disabilities, access to the cost-effective Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit, with its screenings, services and therapies, can make a major difference in their lives. Access to these important services enables them to lead healthy and more active lives; avoid additional disabilities; continue to live at home with their families; make it through school; get and keep a job; and participate actively in the community in which they live
- Medicaid is the largest source of financing for HIV/AIDS care, as well as state and local spending on mental health, mental retardation, and developmental disabilities services in the country. These services help ensure that children and adults with disabilities have access to the supports necessary to live healthier, more independent, and productive lives.
- For people with epilepsy, mental illness, and a variety of other conditions, Medicaid often is the only source of access to life-saving prescription drug coverage.
- For people with a variety of physical disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, cerebral palsy, or amputations, Medicaid usually is the only way to access durable medical equipment like wheelchairs or prosthetic devices, as well as assistive technology. These are the very supports that allow individuals to live independent and productive lives, be employed, and part of the community.

Medicaid is essential to the viability of the nation's health care system and more effective than the private market at reining in health care costs -- Medicaid keeps private insurance premiums lower than they otherwise would because it covers the people with the greatest health care needs and the highest costs. Other payers could learn much from Medicaid's success – as its spending has grown at a much slower rate than private health insurance. From 2002 to 2004, per-person spending in Medicaid rose 6.7 percent, almost half the12.5 percent rate of the private market. The growing cost of health care in our country is an issue that must be resolved. According to a recent report by the Census Bureau, the number of uninsured people rose by 1.4 million (to 45 million) between 2002 and 2003. As the number of people with private insurance falls, Medicaid provides an important counter balance. In addition, Medicaid provides critical supports to dually-eligible Medicare beneficiaries and its funding supports the nation's public health infrastructure, including public hospitals and community health centers.

CCD believes that the policy debate must be refocused onto how to ensure adequate and appropriate resources for a successful Medicaid program and how to enact structural changes in the nation's health care system so that Medicaid and other payers can continue to finance the costs of necessary health and long-term services and supports.

The Senate Budget Committee's reconciliation instruction to cut $15 billion in Medicaid spending over five years is unacceptable to consumers, providers, states, and others who care about providing health and long-term services to children and adults with disabilities and their families.

We are all fortunate to live in a great nation. This greatness is reflected, in part, in the manner in which we support all of our residents, including people with disabilities. Even though many people with disabilities and their families still struggle to access needed benefits and services, our nation can be truly proud of Medicaid. Building an America where we all want to live must be an ongoing effort, one that requires each of us to contribute to a free, compassionate, and hopeful world for ourselves and future generations.

Medicaid is a lifeline for millions of children and adults with disabilities. On their behalf, we urge you to support the Smith-Bingaman amendment. Thank you.

Discussion: VW briefed the Commissioners on the proposed Medicaid cut which are targeted at waivers. RI has made extensive use of waivers for home and community based services.

MOTION: To Send a letter to the Congressional Delegation Regarding the Impact of Medicaid Budget Cuts on people with disabilities RMcM/AP passed; BE nay, PR abstain

2) Social Security Privatization

February 10, 2005 Rhode Islanders for Social and Economic Security Letter

The Bush Administration has proposed dramatic cuts in federal spending on domestic programs that if enacted would threaten the health, education, safety and general well being of residents and would erode the economic foundation that Rhode Island, and our cities and towns, rely on to meet these needs.

We are writing to you today to invite you to sign on in support of a new and growing coalition that has formed to respond to this threat. The coalition, **Rhode Islanders for Social and Economic Security (RISES)**, is a diverse array of consumer groups, advocates, women's groups, disability organizations, labor unions, retiree organizations and professional associations. We are committed to coordinating our efforts to protect Social Security from the President's privatization plan and to ensuring no cuts or caps in Medicaid or Medicare. During the coming months, we will work to educate the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation and Rhode Islanders on these critical issues because:

- **Social Security is our promise to each other** to care for each other. For 70 years Social Security has reliably provided retirement security, life insurance coverage and disability coverage to all Americans. 18% of Rhode Islanders rely on monthly Social Security benefits, including retirees, disabled, and children. The Bush Administration proposal reduces guaranteed benefits and saddles future generations with a huge debt, projected at over $2 trillion in the first ten years.
- **Medicaid supports all families AND our economy.** It must be protected. More than 25 million children receive health care coverage from Medicaid which funds Rhode Island's tremendously successful RIte Care program. Another 5 million elderly and 8 million disabled depend on Medicaid. Medicaid pays for nearly half of all nursing home care in the country. The Administration has proposed cuts of $45 billion over the next 10 years, nearly a $2.5 million dollar loss in Federal dollars to Rhode Island over that time.
- **Medicare takes care of our seniors** regardless of income, ensuring all seniors access to quality, affordable health care. Last year the Administration was successful in pushing through a Medicare privatization plan under the guise of providing desperately needed prescription drug coverage for seniors. This plan will go in to full effect in 2006 and will have a substantial effect on low-income seniors who also receive Medicaid.

Seventeen Rhode Island organizations have already joined as coalition partners including the American Association of University Women RI, the Senior Agenda Consortium, Disability Law Center, Ocean State Action Fund, The Poverty Institute at the RI College School of Social Work, the RI Alliance of Retired Americans, RI Arc, Gray Panthers, National Association of Social Workers RI, National Council of Jewish Women RI District, National Education Association RI, Planned Parenthood RI, RI for Health Care, RI National Organization of Women, RI Council of Community Mental Health Organizations, Service Employees International Union, and the Women's Health & Education Fund.

By endorsing the coalition, your organization will lend its name to this growing list of those who share the belief that Government has an important role to play in providing for the social and economic security of its people. You will also receive regular updates on Federal budget issues and timely action alerts that will make it easy for you to participate in defending these critical social programs. Please join us today!

Also, please take action now! Let us know if your organization can be listed on the attached letter to members of our Congressional Delegation. The letter calls on them to publicly announce opposition to any legislation that would:

- Privatize or cut Social Security now or in the future, including changes in age or income eligibility, or that borrows from the Social Security trust fund;
- Cut, cap or structurally change the Medicaid or Medicare programs.

Discussion: VW briefed the Commissioners on the proposed changes to Social Security, Medicaid & Medicare.

MOTION: To send a letter to the Congressional Delegation Regarding the Impact of Social Security Disabilities Income - retain the existing benefit structure while removing the disincentives to returning to work. PR/RMcM passed, BE no.

MOTION: To Send a letter to the Congressional Delegation Regarding the Impact on Dual Medicaid/Medicare recipients being moved into the Medicare Prescription coverage, that has a more restrictive formulary. PR/RMcM passed BE no.

3) Mental Health Budget Cuts

NAMI E-News February 8, 2005 Vol. 5-4

President's FY 2006 Budget Hurts Mental Illness Programs

As is being widely reported in the press, on 2/7/05 President Bush unveiled his $2.5 trillion budget plan for FY 2006 - with major increases proposed for defense and homeland security, but only a .7% increase for all other domestic discretionary programs. These tight constraints on domestic discretionary spending (which comprise only about 16% of all federal outlays) come against the backdrop of a growing federal budget deficit that is now projected at $427 billion in the current fiscal year.

As a result, there is growing pressure in Congress to constrain spending - especially on discretionary programs that are funded by the annual appropriations bills that Congress must pass before FY 2006 begins on October 1, 2005. By contrast, mandatory entitlement programs (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, etc.) continue growing unless Congress enacts changes in benefits or eligibility rules.

The result is that any increase in non-defense/non-homeland security discretionary activities (including biomedical research, housing assistance, human services and veterans' medical care) will be difficult to achieve in the current budgetary environment. More importantly, the political momentum behind the need to reduce the budget deficit is likely to make the proposed cuts in the President's budget difficult to resist.

Among the highlights and concerns for NAMI in the President's FY 2006 budget are:
- Mental Illness Research - Funding for the NIMH is increased less than 1/2 of 1% at $1.418 billion,
- Mental Illness Services - Most programs at SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services are held to a freeze at current levels, with the exception of a $6 million boost for State Incentives Grants for "Mental Health Transformation,"
- Housing - Deep cuts are proposed for the HUD Section 811 program, with elimination of all funding for production of units within the program,
- Veterans - An initiative to expand treatment for veterans with mental illness by $100 million,
- Medicaid - $60 billion in proposed reductions over the next decade through tightening of rules on state matching funds,
- Justice - No funding proposed for the new program authorized by the "Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act"; elimination of the Byrne discretionary grants used in many states to fund jail diversion programs.

A more detailed analysis of the proposed FY 2006 budgets for agencies and programs of importance to people with severe mental illnesses and their families can be found at: www.nami.org

Discussion: VW briefed the Commissioners on the proposed cuts to Mental Health services.

MOTION: To send a letter to the Congressional Delegation Regarding the Impact of Mental Health Budget Cuts on people with disabilities PR/RMcM passed; BE no

4) AIDS Treatment Funding

February 18, 2004 American Association of People with Disabilities / SAVE ADAP Committee / AIDS Treatment Activists Coalition (ATAC)

Dear (Member of Congress/President Bush)

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge your support for an emergency supplemental appropriation of $180 million for the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), for Fiscal Year 2004.
As you know, ADAP, funded under Title II of the Ryan White CARE Act, provides access to treatment for low-income people living with HIV/AIDS who are uninsured or lack adequate prescription drug coverage. It is the final safety net for Americans who have no other means of accessing HIV medications, and a lifeline for approximately 95,000 clients every month.
However, many state ADAPs are facing financial difficulties and unable to meet the needs of those who depend on the program. According to the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors (NASTAD), as of November 2003, sixteen states have implemented restrictions to treatment access, including waiting lists of nearly 700 people in thirteen states. Five more states are anticipating new or additional restrictions in the next few months.
Meanwhile, the number of people depending on ADAP continues to grow. The Bush Administration has strongly encouraged that all Americans learn their HIV status, and by implementing policies such as the approval and dissemination of the rapid HIV test, the numbers of people being tested are growing. As the ADAP Monitoring Report produced by NASTAD, the AIDS Treatment Data Network, and the Kaiser Family Foundation illustrates, many of these new HIV cases are people who are disproportionately uninsured and low-income and need safety net programs such as ADAP to access treatment that will keep them healthy and productive.
Congress has approved a $35 million increase for ADAP for FY 2004 in the Omnibus Appropriations Bill. While this increase is appreciated, it falls well short of the $215 million increase identified by treatment experts as needed to alleviate the current ADAP crisis. Therefore, we urge your leadership in securing an emergency supplemental appropriation for the remaining $180 million. In addition, we urge you to also support the highest funding possible for the entire Ryan White CARE Act and other vital HIV/AIDS programs in the next appropriations process.

Discussion: VW briefed the Commissioners on the proposed level funding of AIDs Treatment. No action taken.

5) Transportation Priorities

March, 2005 CCD TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE PRIORITIES

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) is comprised of over 100 national organizations representing the interests of people with disabilities. CCD's Transportation Task Force is very interested in transportation reauthorization legislation, particularly the sections that relate to people with disabilities. Individuals may be limited in their mobility due to physical, sensory, or cognitive disabilities, and as a rule are more reliant on public transportation than the general public. It is critical that transportation legislation ensures that people with disabilities have safe, affordable and accessible transportation to fully participate in community life. The following issues must be addressed in the legislation:

- **NEW FREEDOM INITIATIVE:** The New Freedom Initiative (NFI) must be maintained as a program separate and apart from Section 5310. CCD supports the President's request for $158.4 million in funding for this critical new initiative. The NFI is intended to remove barriers and provide services to people with disabilities beyond that required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, and therefore has a distinctly different purpose than 5310. Although NFI projects must be coordinated with 5310 services, it is not intended exclusively for 5310-type segregated transportation services. Accepted uses of NFI funds include accessible taxi, van-pooling and ridesharing programs, voucher and volunteer driver programs and mobility management programs.

Further, combining these programs would grant eligibility to public transit agencies. CCD is very concerned that non-profits may be edged out by public agencies in allocations of already insufficient funding in Section 5310 programs. We ask that you support the New Freedom Initiative as a separate and distinct program.

SECTION 5310: Funds authorized under Section 5310 of TEA-21 provide critical transportation services for people with disabilities and senior citizens. The current funding level of $91 million is grossly insufficient to meet current demand and must be greatly increased. To increase flexibility and innovation at the local level, funding from any source, including federal funds, should be eligible to be used as matching funds by the local entity. Also, much § 5310 money is used simply to replace aging vehicles. To best meet local needs, local entities must also have access to operating assistance.

CCD asks that Section 5310 funding be consistent with other state operated transportation, i.e., JARC and New Freedom Initiative, and changed to make projects eligible for 80/20 share for capital expenses and a 50/50 share for operating expenses.

PROJECT ACTION: Easter Seals Project ACTION (Accessible Community Transportation in Our Nation) is a federally funded program that promotes transportation accessibility for people with disabilities and helps transit providers comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Project ACTION has become the nation's leading resource on transportation accessibility. The Project has funded 84 innovative demonstration projects and research initiatives in local communities throughout the nation. Project ACTION works with transit systems across the nation to provide information about the most cost-effective means to improve accessibility and achieve ADA compliance. CCD request that Project Action be funded at $3.5 million annually.

- **PLANNING:** CCD supports the inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of transportation plans and projects. All too often, access for people with disabilities is not considered during the planning and design of transportation projects. Expressly including people with disabilities in the planning process will go a long way toward addressing this critical issue.

- **MOBILITY MANAGEMENT:** Mobility management may provide planning services for improving coordination among public and other transportation providers, manage public transportation demand and focus on customer need. Transit dependent populations, including people with disabilities, often find that transportation is lacking and therefore opportunities for employment, education, and recreation are unnecessarily limited. Mobility management programs are intended to better identify customer needs and plan transportation services to effectively meet those needs. CCD asks that money for mobility management activities be included in reauthorization.
- **FAIR SHARE FOR SAFETY:** Another priority for CCD is improving accessibility to sidewalks, crosswalks and other public rights of way. An accessible public route has the added benefit of being a safe public route. A safe accessible pedestrian route is wide and level enough to allow wheelchair use and has curb cuts where needed. Accessible pedestrian signals at intersections provide information about safe crossing to people who are blind or have low vision. Also, adequate crossing time allows all pedestrians to cross safely.

Despite the availability of STP and CMAQ funds for pedestrian walkways and transportation enhancements, most states expend little funding to improve sidewalks, crosswalks, signals and curbs. While 12% of all traffic deaths are pedestrians, less than one percent (0.7percent) of federal transportation construction operations and maintenance are spent to ensure a safe walking environment. In addition, states have under-spent the funds available for the Transportation Enhancements program by about $700 million since FY 1998.

TEA-21 reauthorization should provide $250 million from the Surface Transportation Program Safety Set-aside program to support "Safe Access to Transit". We also support the "Fair Share for Safety", an allocation from the Highway Safety Improvement program for bicycle and pedestrian safety based on state safety records on pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities.

The undersigned members of CCD's Transportation Task Force ask that you support these provisions in the reauthorization of TEA-21. CCD appreciates your support for integrated accessible public transportation for people with disabilities.

Discussion: VW briefed the Commissioners on the proposed reauthorization of transportation programs.

MOTION: To defer to Executive Committee for further research and action concerning the reauthorization Transportation for people with disabilities. AP/PR passed unanimously

6) HR 27 "Job Training Improvement Act"

Feb. 14 2005 Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Comments

The Honorable John Boehner, Chairman
House Education and the Workforce Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Boehner:

I am writing on behalf of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) to provide comments and recommendations regarding the Job Training Improvement Act of 2005 (H.R. 27). I have attached a document that outlines CSAVR's concerns with H.R. 27 and makes recommendations to address those concerns.

CSAVR is composed of the chief administrators of the State VR Agencies serving individuals with physical and mental disabilities in the states, the District of Columbia, and the territories. These agencies, which constitute the state partners in the State-Federal program of vocational rehabilitation services authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act, have evidence-based research demonstrating their success in assisting eligible individuals with disabilities in achieving their chosen employment goals.

Return on Investment: The Public VR program is one of the most successful employment and training programs ever funded by Congress. In any given year, State VR Agencies nationwide provide services and supports to and supervise the rehabilitation of approximately 1.2 million individuals with disabilities. Of those served in FY 2004, more than 213,000 entered competitive employment and became tax paying citizens. Many of these people are no longer on public benefits. In their first full year of work, these new wage earners will pay over $300 million in Federal taxes, $90 million in State income taxes, and $500 million in Social Security and Medicare taxes (self and employer). In addition, according to the Social Security Administration's (SSA) FY 2004 end of year report, "Recap on VR Reimbursements," the projected savings to the Trust Fund resulting from VR successfully employing SSI and SSDI beneficiaries in FY 2004 was $470.3 million. Based on these figures, SSA estimates that the projected savings to expenditures under the SSA/VR cost reimbursement program is $6 for every $1 reimbursed to VR in FY 2004. An October 2004 evaluation of the Massachusetts VR program projected an increase in lifetime earnings for VR consumers ranging from $14 to $18 dollars for each $1 invested in VR. For every dollar spent on VR in MA, there is an estimated return in tax revenues of $5. The evaluation found that most people pay back almost twice (1.7%) the cost of their services in ten years.

When WIA was first authorized, it consolidated a number of employment and training programs in an effort to create a seamless service delivery system. Unfortunately, this consolidation was accompanied by a significant cut in funding, with additional cuts in funding in subsequent years. As a result, WIA has resulted in a substantial decline in funding available for actual training when compared to its predecessor program. By giving Governor's the authority to tap partner funds to pay for infrastructure costs of the One-Stop system, H.R. 27 proposed to take funds from the WIA partner programs to make up for this deficit. These partner programs, particularly the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program, are already under-funded to meet the needs of their target populations.

CSAVR has a number of concerns regarding H.R. 27 as currently drafted. Our primary concerns include the following.

1) H.R. 27 does not address the need for increased funding for VR, but rather exacerbates current funding shortages by giving Governor's the authority to divert scarce resources away from the Public VR program to pay for infrastructure costs of One-Stop Centers while, at the same time:

A) removing the requirement that mandatory partners (such as VR) serve on Local Workforce Investment Boards where key decisions are made about funding and service provision;

B) significantly increasing VR's responsibilities with regard to the provision of transition services for students with disabilities; and

C) failing to ensure that each state gets an increase equal to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase for the previous year.

2) CSAVR is gravely concerned about the Administration's proposal, for WIA reauthorization, referred to as WIA Plus Consolidation. This proposal if adopted as part of H.R. 27 could potentially divert all of the VR funding in a state away from the Public VR Program with the expectation that individuals with significant disabilities will be able to receive the same level and scope of services through the state's system of One-Stop Centers. A recent GAO report found that many One-Stop Centers are still not fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. If this proposal is added to H.R. 27, it has the potential to eliminate with 84 years of dedicated funding for specialized services and supports to facilitate the employment of individuals with significant disabilities.

I have attached a document that includes more detailed information on CSAVR's concerns with HR 27 and provides recommendations and suggested legislative language to address these concerns. I trust you will give serious consideration to the specialized services and supports that are necessary for many individuals with significant disabilities to engage in, maintain and advance in employment; services and supports that are not available through the generic workforce system except through the participation of VR.

Currently, the federal government spends approximately $200 billion a year on various types of assistance for individuals with disabilities. Of that, less than $3 billion is appropriated to address the employment and training needs of individuals with significant disabilities. The Nation's public policy must be directed toward the realization that a significant investment of resources must be made if people with disabilities are to have access to the individualized services and supports necessary to increase their independence and their economic self-sufficiency.

Sincerely,
Carl Suter
Executive Director

Discussion: VW briefed the Commissioners on the proposed reauthorization of Vocational Rehabilitation within HR 27 the Job Training Improvement Act.

MOTION: Send a letter to the Congressional Delegation not supporting CSAVR position on HR 27,AP/BE passed: Yes: BE, AP, GS, LS, & BN Opposed: RC, VW, & JMcD Abstaining: RMcM; JP; & PR

6:15 PM Questions Concerning the Reports from

Questions about the committee, liaison and staff reports, sent out prior to the meeting.

1. **Membership on the Disability Business Enterprise Committee**

Lou Salerno has resigned from the Disability Business Enterprise Committee, so there is a vacancy for a "person[s] with disabilities". BN introduced Andy Argenbright, who spoke about his background and interest in the DBE Committee's work.

MOTION**:** To give advice on consent to the appointment of Andrew Argenbright to the Disability Business Enterprise Committee. RMcM/RC passed unanimously

2. **Membership on the Disability Parking Committee**

The Disability Parking Committee hasn't been able to meet this year, due to lack of a quorum. There are only 4 members; they need at least 3 for a quorum.

MOTION: To give advice on consent to the appointment of Paul Choquette & Bin Efreom to the Disability Parking Committee. LS/RMcM passed unanimously

3. **Legislation Committee:**
   a. **S 262 / H 5142 Relating to Human Services – Long-Term Home Health Care**

RI Housing requests the Commission support these bills, which would:
I. Require the state to project the case loads for home care, adult day services, assistive living services and the waiver programs in Medicaid, and
II. Fund an addition 180 assisted living support service "slots" in FY 2006.

MOTION: To support S 262 / H 5142 Relating to Human Services – Long-Term Home Health Care RMcM/AP passed, PR abstained

b. H 6157 / S 844 Relating to Sovereign Immunity

The ACLU requests the Commission sign on to a letter of support for the Sovereign Immunity legislation, authorizing civil rights (and other) suits for monetary damages to be filed in federal court against the State of RI for alleged violations of federal civil rights, fair labor standards, and whistleblower protection laws. The Legislation Committee found these bills to be beneficial to people with disabilities.

MOTION: To support H 6157 / S 844 Relating to Sovereign Immunity (including signing on to the ACLU letter). LS/AP passed, PR & JP abstained

4. Election Assistance Committee

Proposal from the American Association of People with Disabilities to "professionalize" the state's voter registration / education / get-out-the vote efforts.

American Association of People with Disabilities'
Rhode Island Disability Vote Project Narrative

The total budget for this project is $209,865.

This project covers 18 months, beginning June 1, 2005 to December 31, 2006. The operating assumptions are:

- Salary and benefits combined for a full-time organizer is $56,250.
- This will be a nonpartisan, permanent, ongoing project. Beginning January 1, 2007, the annual operating costs could be lower than during the startup phase. It is premature at this point to forecast 2007 costs and beyond. Successful projects in other states have been able to identify external funding but it is essential that the disability community provide permanent ongoing support including, staff time and resources, as well as cash for contracts for list enhancement, direct mail, and phone banks.
- $91,615 is budgeted for nonpartisan voter registration and GOTV mailings and phone banks, all focused on the 2006 primary. Assuming that competition and turnout in the 2006 primary are similar to the 2002 primary, 145,269 votes will be cast overall, out of which 119,524 votes for the candidates in the contested primary, with the winner of the contested primary carrying the day by 926 votes.
- If we do our nonpartisan work correctly, voters with disability interests will be 40% of each candidate's total and 20% of the overall turnout.
- By the November 2006 Election, the coalition should have identified 80,300 disability households.
- Approximately 35,573 individuals are registered to vote, leaving 44,727 individuals who need to be registered.
- Nonpartisan voter registration mailings will reach 44,727 unregistered individuals with disability interests. Voter registration phone banking will reach 4,473 individuals. The coalition will register 8,945 new voters.
- Nonpartisan GOTV mailings will reach 32,067 registered voters with disability interests. GOTV phone banking will reach 3,207 individuals.
- AAPD has budgeted $48,000 for 30 working days in Rhode Island ($27,000), plus 150 hours of technical assistance by phone ($21,000).

Proposal Budget	
Full-time Local Organizer	$ 45,000.00
Benefits	$ 11,250.00
List Enhancement	
First enhancement	$ 8,000.00
Second enhancement	$ 6,000.00
	$ 14,000.00
Nonpartisan Voter Registration Mailing	
44,727 unregistered voters x .85 per piece to mail	$ 38,018.00
Nonpartisan Voter Registration Phone Banking	
4,473 completed live calls x 3.43 per completed call	$ 15,341.00
Nonpartisan Primary GOTV Mailing	
32,067 newly registered and occasional voters x .85 per piece	$ 27,257.00
Nonpartisan Primary GOTV Phone Banking	
3,207 completed live calls x 3.43 per completed call	$ 10,999.00
AAPD Onsite Consulting	
10 trips to Rhode Island	
30 working days in RI x $700 per diem	$ 21,000.00
Airfare and transportation, 10 trips x $380	$ 3,800.00
Lodging, 10 trips x $220	$ 2,200.00
	27,000.00
AAPD Offsite Consulting	
150 hours x $140 per hour	$ 21,000.00
Total	**$ 209,865.00**

MOTION: To authorized the Exec Committee to exploring the American Association of People with Disabilities efforts to “professionalize” the state’s voter registration / education / get-out-the vote efforts, RMcM/LS passed unanimously

Written Reports from Committees (submitted prior to the meeting)

Accessibility Committee

The Committee heard from Terreann Greenwood, Chairperson of the Veterans Memorial Association and Mr. Abbott, VMA's designer presented proposed plans for the alterations to the Veteran's Auditorium to include a new elevator and additional restrooms on the first and second levels of the facility. The Commission's staff will request a copy of the handicapped parking policy in the Providence Mall parking garage allocated to the VMA.

Mr. Rioles, President of the R.I. Building Officials Association requested ADA training for the R.I. Building Officials. The Commission and NEADA Center staff would provide the training.

Mr. Littman, Newport Collaborative, requested $25,000 of the Accessibility Bond Funds to provide a ramp to the former Coventry railroad loading dock as part of the DOT Greenway Bike Path. The Accessibility Committee Chair indicated that the ramp would not provide access. The Committee did not take action on this project.

GCD staff briefed the members on the current status of the ADA projects. The Committee de-authorized the following projects: Kent House and Colt State Park and instead authorized $59, 280 for the Rhode Island School for the Deaf; $40,000 for Rhode Island College; and $60,000 for DHS Pasteur facility restroom renovations.

– Joseph Guay, Chair & John Desautel

Disability Business Enterprise Committee

We have had the last two meetings cancelled due to lack of quorum. We have the DBE guide ready for distribution. The DBE web site is up and running http://dbe.gcd.ri.gov. We will have chosen interview candidates by the April 4th meeting. To date nearly 100% of our DBEs have applied for recertification (the missing apps are in the mail). No new DBEs have applied as of yet, but we anticipate 2-3 new ones later this year.

The Purchasing Office has made changes to the RI Vendor Information Program's (RIVIP) website that will allow DBEs to upload information about their goods and services, directly onto the State's purchasing website. This will enable State buyers and others to see first hand what goods and services DBEs are capable of providing. It will be a powerful tool for DBEs to use in their efforts to provide their products to the State and other agencies. The capability also exists for the DBEs to include pictures and graphics for products to create a true on-line catalog.

The Committee is planning a DBE Business Expo once the DBE staff person is in place. The ideal time and place for the Expo is:

1) at the bi-monthly State agency CFO's meeting;
2) at the quarterly CFO meeting hosted by the Controller; or
3) at the annual Providence Business Expo where DBE might pool resources and reserve a section to the floor space for their use.

– Bill Nieranowski, Chair

Disability Parking Committee

I need help!!!!!!!! I have been having great difficulty achieving a quorum at the Disability parking committee hearing, I need volunteers to sit on the committee!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

– Scott Greco, Chair & Nicholas Capobianco, Jr.

Election Assistance Committee & American Association of People with Disabilities – Disability Vote Project

We have met on two occasions and recently finished work on an application and interpretive guidelines for accessing monies through HAVA. The letters will be sent out to the 39 town and cities by 8/1/05, with a requested return by 9/30/05. We will be able to make the wards and during the subsequent year make sure everything is put into place. Committee members represent a fair range of admissibility and advocacy groups; Disability Law Center, Blind/Visual Impaired, Deaf Hard of Hearing, Developmental Disabilities, and a representative from the Board of Elections.

We are reaching out to new England Tech to help with the awareness/poll worker video. They are interested in them opportunity and will send a rep to the next meeting.

The Committee is also looking to get more info from Jim Dickson (Vice President of AAPD) re: a project out of NY (developing a voter list, sending informational letters prior to primaries and general elections letting people know where to vote and whom the candidates are - completely nonpartisan, as well as developing a grass roots effort among disability groups to register and become more active). Ideally, we would like to have Jim and a representative come to discuss the project.

– Rosemary Carmody, Chair & Albert Tardie

Employment/Economic Opportunities Committee

The initial charge of this new committee is to over see and support the implementation of employment related objectives associated with 3 distinct grants. The committee met once, during which Judith Drew was elected [co-]vice chair. During the meeting it became evident that clarity was needed about the scope of work required for each grant. The Committee requested copies of each grant and a work plan to help the committee determine our scope of work. This has been an enlightening process. Over the past year, there has been staff turnover that has interrupted and delayed work on several grant objectives. A work plan is still in development however, the process to date has highlighted strengths that support achieving employment grant objectives and also gaps which are in need of attention. This process also includes review of budget and staff resources to meet our obligations. Additionally, the committee chair and [co-]vice chair are assessing how employment related activity is recorded and reported to meet the needs of each grant. The commission is still short 1 person short. Until a new person is hired some employment grant outcomes will be difficult to achieve.

RI Business Leadership Network

RIBLN formation committee has expanded to a total of 10 employers. New co-chairs have been elected, with this transition the committee is finalizing it's goals for 2005 and 2006. The commission sent a letter to the new co-chairs stating our commitment of $3000 to support training.

US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy &
National Association of Governors' Committees on People with Disabilities

Christine and/or I have participated in NAGC monthly conference calls.

Most other state's have a sole focus of employment. Many support the implementation of ODEP national initiatives, such as the Youth Leadership Forums, Business Leadership Network, National Employment of People with Disabilities Month, among others. Christine Rancourt will attend the Annual meeting in April. To support dissemination of national initiatives and resources, information received from ODEP and NAGC is integrated into a bi-weekly employment disability e-news published by the Sherlock Center on Disabilities.

- Vicki E. Ferrara, Chair & Christine Rancourt

Hearing Board

The Hearing Board members received two evenings of training on “due process”.

Special Commission to Study Transit Service in the State of Rhode Island - No Report Submitted

State Board of Elections' Voter Registration - No meetings in years

State Planning Council's Transportation Advisory Committee - No Report Submitted

- John J. MacDonald, Chair & Harvey Salvas

Information and Adaptive Technology Committee

No meetings have been scheduled since the last Commission meeting.

– Regina Connor, Chair & Harvey Salvas

Legislation Committee

Status of Commission's Legislative Package

Supports this bill if it's amended

Continued

05 H-5270 Art. 30 COMPENSATION OF BOARD MEMBERS Rep. Watson

Total Continued: 1

Commission Total Supports this bill if its amended: 1

Commission Supports this bill

Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration

05 S-0114 MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- ADJUDICATION OF TRAFFIC OFFENSES Sen. Blais Identical to H 5220

05 S-0171 HUMAN SERVICES - HEALTH CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RESIDENTS ACT Sen. Gibbs

05 S-0238 HUMAN SERVICES - HEALTH CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RESIDENTS ACT Sen. Perry Identical to H 5382

05 S-0261 HUMAN SERVICES -- HEALTH CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RESIDENTS ACT Sen. Lanzi

05 S-0413 HUMAN SERVICES -- PERSONAL CARE ATTENDANT PROGRAM Sen. Gallo

05 S-0801 HEALTH CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RESIDENTS Sen. Paiva-Weed Identical H 5734

Total Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration: 6

In Committee

05 S-0062 TAXATION - PROPERTY TAX RELIEF Sen. Felag Similar to H 5370, H 5475 & H 5270 Art. 04

05 S-0651 HOUSING RESOURCES - NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM Sen. Felag Similar to 5270 Art. 06 & H 5175

05 H-5175 HOUSING RESOURCES - NEIGHBORHOOD OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM Rep. Fox Identical to S 651, Similar to 5270 Art. 06

05 H-5220 MOTOR AND OTHER VEHICLES -- ADJUDICATION OF TRAFFIC OFFENSES Rep. McNamara Identical to S 0114

05 H-5270 Art. 06 CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM Rep. Watson Similar to H 5175 & S 651

05 H-5370 TAXATION - PROPERTY TAX RELIEF Rep. McManus Similar to H 5270 Art. 04, H 5472, & S 0062

05 H-5382 HUMAN SERVICES - HEALTH CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RESIDENTS ACT Rep. Slater Identical to S 238

05 H-5475 PROPERTY TAX RELIEF Rep. Amaral Similar to S 62, H 5370, & H 5270 Art. 04

Total In Committee: 8

Continued

05 H-5270 Art. 01/05 GCD MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE STATE FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2006 Rep. Watson

05 H-5270 Art. 04 PROPERTY TAX RELIEF Rep. Watson Similar to H 5370 & S 0062

05 H-5270 Art. 08 GENERAL PUBLIC ASSISTANCE HARDSHIP CONTINGENCY FUND Rep. Watson

05 H-5734 HUMAN SERVICES -- HEALTH CARE FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED RESIDENTS ACT Rep. Naughton Identical to S 801

Total Continued: 4

Commission Total Supports this bill: 18

Opposes this bill
Continued

05 H-5270 Art. 14 MEDICAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN DISABLED CHILDREN Rep. Watson

Total Continued: 1

Commission Total Opposes this bill: 1

Grand Total Bills the Commission has Taken a Position: 20

Legislation Committee finds this bill Beneficial

Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration

05 S-0139 HUMAN SERVICES -- ESTABLISHING A LONG-TERM CARE IMPROVEMENT FUND Sen. Connors Identical to H 5300

05 S-0397 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT Sen. Goodwin Identical to H 5299

05 S-0522 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE ELDERLY PROTECTION ACT OF 2005 Sen. Roberts Identical to H 5332

05 S-0815 HUMAN SERVICES -- ALL-INCLUSIVE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY Sen. Alves

Total Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration: 4

Passed

05 S-0377 MEMORIALIZING CONGRESS TO OPPOSE PRIVATIZATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY Sen. Goodwin Identical to H 5364

Total Passed: 1

In Committee

05 S-0145 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE SHELTER TO HOUSING PROGRAM Sen. Perry Identical to H 5385 & H 5793, Similar to H 5289 & S 0204

05 S-0204 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - RHODE ISLAND HOUSING RESOURCES ACT OF 1998 Sen. Pichardo Identical to H 5289, Similar to H 5385, H 5793, & S 145

05 S-0291 TOWNS AND CITIES -- ZONING ORDINANCES Sen. Levesque

05 S-0749 MENTAL HEALTH, RETARDATION, AND HOSPITALS - DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH Sen. Pichardo Identical to H 5482

05 S-0844 SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY Sen. McCaffrey Identical to H 6157

05 H-5226 HEALTH AND SAFETY -- ENVIRONMENTAL LEAD PROGRAM Rep. Lewiss Similar to H 5383

05 H-5285 TAXATION -- CIGARETTE TAX Rep. Rice

05 H-5288 INSURANCE Rep. Slater

05 H-5289 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - RHODE ISLAND HOUSING RESOURCES ACT OF 1998 Rep. Slater Identical to S 0204, Similar to H 5385, H 5793, & S 145

05 H-5299 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- ELDERLY PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE Rep. Ginaitt Identical to S 397

05 H-5300 HUMAN SERVICES -- ESTABLISHING A LONG-TERM CARE IMPROVEMENT FUND Rep. Slater Identical to S 139

05 H-5332 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE ELDERLY PROTECTION ACT OF 2005 Rep. Sullivan
Identical to S 522

05 H-5364 MEMORIALIZING CONGRESS TO OPPOSE PRIVATIZATION OF SOCIAL SECURITY Rep. Moura Identical to S 377

05 H-5372 THE RHODE ISLAND STUDENT INVESTMENT INITIATIVE Rep. Moran

05 H-5385 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE HOUSING FIRST, ENDING HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE Rep. Slater Identical to S 145 & H 5793, Similar to H 5289 & S 204

05 H-5482 MENTAL HEALTH, RETARDATION, AND HOSPITALS - DIVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH Rep. Slater Identical to S 749

05 H-5600 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT -- ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES Rep. Mumford Identical to S 516
05 H-5735 EDUCATION -- HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS Rep. D Caprio
05 H-5790 PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ELDERLY Rep. Crowley Similar to S 236
05 H-5793 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE SHELTER TO HOUSING PROGRAM Rep. Slater Identical to H 5385 & S 145, Similar to H
5289 & S 0204
05 H-6044 PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC TRANSIT AUTHORITY Rep. Handy
05 H-6157 SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY Rep. Moura Identical to S 844

Total In Committee: 22

Continued

05 S-0516 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- THE EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT -- ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES Sen. Gibbs Identical to H 5600
05 S-0654 LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE -- NATIONAL GUARD Sen. Breene
05 H-5055 HEALTH AND SAFETY Rep. Palumbo
05 H-5182 HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS Rep. Naughton
05 H-5186 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION Rep. Almeida
05 H-5236 BRIDLE AND HIKING TRAILS Rep. Gorham
05 H-5621 HEALTH AND SAFETY - - PUBLIC BEACH SMOKING POLLUTION CONTROL ACT Rep. Lewiss
05 H-5758 ELECTIONS -- ELECTION OFFENSES Rep. Handy

Total Continued: 8

Legislative Cmte Total finds this bill Beneficial: 35

<u>Legislative Cmte finds this bill Beneficial if amended</u>

Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration

05 S-0236 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - - PHARMACEUTICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ELDERLY Sen. Perry Similar to H 5790

Total Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration: 1

Recommend Passage

05 S-0022 DOMESTIC RELATIONS -- CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT Sen. Bates

Total Recommend Passage: 1

In Committee

05 S-0122 SCHOOL AND MUNICIPAL PLAYGROUND SAFETY Sen. Blais
05 S-0183 HEALTH AND SAFETY- STEM CELL RESEARCH Sen. Perry Identical to H 6047
05 S-0202 PUBLIC OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES -- SALARIES AND TRAVELING EXPENSES Sen. Gibbs
05 H-5291 HUMAN SERVICES -- PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ACT Rep. Slater
05 H-6047 HEALTH AND SAFETY- STEM CELL RESEARCH Rep. Ajello Identical to S 183

Total In Committee: 5

Legislative Cmte Total finds this bill Beneficial if amended: 7

<u>Legislative Cmte finds these bills Harmful</u>

Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration

05 H-5863 ELECTIONS -- MAIL BALLOTS Rep. Slater
05 H-5880 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- LEAD HAZARD MITIGATION Rep. McManus

Total Scheduled for hearing and/or consideration: 2

Passed

05 S-0439 ASSAULTS Sen. McCaffrey Identical to H 5544

Total Passed: 1

In Committee

05 S-0078 INSURANCE Sen. Blais Similar to S 841, H 5233, & H 5763

05 S-0124 APPROVE AND PUBLISH AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE (INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM) Sen. Cote Identical to H 5243 & 6127, Related to S 0125 & H 5245

05 S-0125 INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM Sen. Cote Identical to H 5245, Related to S 0124, H 5243 & H 6127

05 S-0172 STATE EDUCATION - - MANDATES Sen. Blais Similar to H 5063

05 S-0841 INSURANCE Sen. Daniel P. Connors Similar to S 0078, H 5233, & H 5763

05 H-5063 TOWNS AND CITIES Rep. Kilmartin Similar to S 0172

05 H-5701 PUBLIC RECORDS -- ACCESS Rep. Dennigan

Total In Committee: 7

Continued

05 H-5020 HEALTH AND SAFETY Rep. Faria

05 H-5111 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- LEAD HAZARD MITIGATION Rep. McHugh Similar to H 5112, H 5235

05 H-5112 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT -- LEAD HAZARD MITIGATION Rep. McHugh Similar to H 5111, H 5235

05 H-5233 MANDATED BENEFITS REVIEW ACT Rep. Menard Similar to S 0078, S 841, & H 5763

05 H-5235 STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT - - LEAD HAZARD MITIGATION Rep. Lewiss Similar to H 5111, H 5112

05 H-5243 PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE (INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM) Rep. Picard Identical to H 6127 & S 0124, Related to H 5245 & S 0125

05 H-5245 INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM Rep. Picard Identical to S 0125, Related to H 5243, H 6127 & S 0124

05 H-5544 RELATING TO ASSAULTS Reps. Naughton Identical to S 439

05 H-5723 PARKING PRIVILEGES Rep. Lewiss

05 H-5763 INSURANCE Rep. Church Similar to S 0078, S 841, & H 5233

05 H-6127 TO APPROVE AND PUBLISH, AND SUBMIT TO THE ELECTORS A PROPOSITION OF AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE (INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM) Rep. Nicholas Gorham Identical to H 5243 & S 124, Related to S 0125 & H 5245

Total Continued: 11

Legislative Cmte Total finds this bill Harmful: 21

Grand Total Legislation Committee has Issued an Impact Statement: 63

Grand Total Number of Bills in Legislative Package: 83

- Victoria Wilcox, Chair & Bob Cooper

State Coordinating Committee on Disability Rights

The Committee approved training for State ADA Coordinators, which would be provided by the Regional ADA & IT Center and GCD staff. Two 3 hr. sessions on the ADA Titles I (employment) & II (government services), as well as state agencies' obligations to monitor contractors/vendors who provide services with state funds. The training will be held on May 24th & 26th at Barry Hall's computer training center.

–Paul Choquette, Chair & Bob Cooper

Executive Committee

The Committee reviewed the Commission's operations and the impact of shifting fiscal, purchasing, & payroll services to the Central Business Office of the Department of Administration. The Committee sent the Director of Administration a letter, responding to her January 31st email and letter regarding personnel functions. All the Committee members will be participating in a workshop of Sexual Harassment once the Disability Business Enterprise / Public Information Coordinator is hired. The Committee reviewed 9 applications for the DBE/PI Coordinator's position and will be interviewing 4 people the week of April 18th.

– Paul Choquette, Chair & Bob Cooper

Reports from Liaisons

Defense Civil Preparedness Advisory Committee

Department of Elderly Affairs' Information & Referral / Diversity Committee

No Reports Received

- Joseph Corrente

Department of Elderly Affairs' Information & Referral / Diversity Committee

Meetings held with outreach undertaken & planned for many needs and multicultural efforts with particular attention to the disability community needs.

Department of Education's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development Advisory Committee;

Significant efforts are underway from data collection, research and outreach to get more successful education efforts especially with and for teachers in the special education area. The new IDEA legislation will have some changes depending on the number of the RI efforts to accept or supersede the requirements of the Feds....from Transition to IEP meetings themselves.

Department of Elderly Affairs' Health Care Resource Center Advisory Committee

This has been a committee in efforts to refocus especially with a website and resources and without the physical building in the near future. There is movement to hosting a site that will collect data from multiple sources from Crossroads to Government agencies for equal access and non- duplication.

Youth Leadership Forum

There are things from the expansion of the August program by one day to the increased number of youth already signed up for this annual program. Wide set of participants in formulating another successful program. Sponsors are always needed and donations of goody bags for the attendees.

Rhodes to Independence Steering Committee

This committee has done some significant things from the 4 section module for Youth in Transition which will be used for agencies, schools and organizations helping both parents and youth understanding and their empowerment to move on thru higher education to career....to the efforts to bring Housing and Diversity to more involvement.

- Arthur M. Plitt

Housing Resource Commission / Policy Strategic Housing Planning Committee

The Office of Policy and Planning continues to meet regularly and a Steering Committee was formed to select a consultant. A Request for Proposals was advertised and five firms responded to the RFP. The Selection Committee recommended contracting with Abt Associates to develop the strategic plan. The budget proposed by Abt Associates is $191,783 and The Rhode Island Foundation and the United Way have committed $100,000 to the project. At the April 15th meeting, the consultants will provide an overview of the plans for the next four months.

National Organization on Disability

Pasadena, California won $25,000 as the winner of the N.O.D.'s fourth annual Accessible America Contest. Pasadena was honored as a national model for its focus on disability issues and its successful design of programs, services and facilities that are accessible for citizens and visitors who have disabilities.

The National Organization on Disability and Harris Interactive released its 2004 N.O.D./Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities. It is available in electronic format for $75.00 or $45.00 for students, disability organizations and other non-profits.
Material related to the National Capital Region Conference on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities is available via the NOD website.

The World Committee on Disability and the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute honored the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan with the Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award.
Governor's Advisory Council on Health
This Council has not met in a few years.

--Kate McCarthy-Barnett, Ed.D.

Orestes P. Monterecy
Rehabilitation Building Code's Drafting Committee
No meetings in years

Reports from Staff

Civil Rights Roundtable
The Roundtable has endorsed the Commission's civil rights related legislation.

New England ADA & Accessible IT Advisory Board & Grant
Training: none during the quarter. Activities scheduled for the next quarter include: a workshop on the GCD and ADA to Faculty, Staff and Students on April 13th at Rhode Island College; Tools for ADA Coordinators training sessions on May 24th & May 26th; IT Technical Skills Training at Tolman High School in Pawtucket on April 8th for speech pathologists and 29th for social workers.
Technical Assistance contacts: 65 telephone calls, 50 e-mails received, 21 e-mails sent, 2 walk-ins
ADA Public Awareness activities: 2 teleconferences; 2 audio conferences & 1 print media article
ADA Materials disseminated: 12 mailings; 21 e-mail; 6 web site downloads; & 85 hand delivered.
US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy & National Association of Governors' Committees on People with Disabilities
Will be attending their national training conference in Kansas City

Promoting Work Grant
Job accommodation related material distributed to employers
Assist in the development of the Business Leadership Network in Rhode Island (BLN) with the University of Rhode Island, Rhode Island College's Sherlock Center on Disabilities, and Rhode Island Bureau of Investigation
Involved in the Rhodes to Independence and its Steering, Transition to Work, and Housing Committees.
Technical Assistance was provided to: Life Span; Warwick School Department; RI Department of Corrections; RI College's Sherlock Center; and an attorney, Stephen Dennis
Telephone Assistance, 50 e-mails received, 21 e-mails sent, 2 walk-ins.
4 ABLE TOO… shows produced

- Christine R. Rancourt

Department of Administration's Information Resources Management Committee - Not met since last Commission meeting
Department of Labor and Training's Elevator Committee - Not met since last Commission meeting
New England ADA & Accessible IT Advisory Board & Grant
Their Quarterly meeting will be at Fort Adams on June 7th
RI Websites Standards Committee - Not met since last Commission meeting
RI Webmasters Committee
The Committee's focus is currently on the larger (more complicated) websites.

- Harvey O. Salvas

Department of Health's Arthritis State Plan Advisory Committee
Hasn't met since the last Commission meeting

RI Public Transit Authority's Accessible Transportation Advisory Committee
Last Thursday's meeting of the ATAC was entirely taken up by a study of the by-laws February's meeting was a quarterly one with RIPTA staff at Melrose St. Jim Dean, Director of Transportation, gave the Lift Failures and Response Times Report for the last three months. He said that this compares favorably with 2003. Jim further explained that average waiting times after a wheelchair lift failed on the road; are well within the maximum of 30 minutes waiting time after a lift fails, required by the Federal Regulations. He also reported that the ADA announcements monitoring report on the compliance rates for the last 3 months were, 74% in October, 2004, and 66% in November, 2004, and
73% in December, 2004. It was explained that these compliance rates were some of the best in the country. It was stressed that the ultimate goal was 100% compliance. Discussion occurred about the approximately 10-20 drivers each month who did no announcements, and ways to address that situation. Reference was made to a recent letter from Bob Coffee, as ATAC Co-chair, to Al Moscola. The letter recognized RIPTA and the drivers who are doing the ADA announcements well, but expressing great concern about this.

- Teresa Carr-Hopkins

Emergency Management Agency Advisory Committee & Task Force
I have not been able to attend the last 4 meetings due to illness and other commitments.

US Department of Education /Office for Civil Rights & RI Department of Education /Office of Equity and Access
I am still providing technical assistance to school districts also I would like to report the continuing effort pertaining to the North Kingstown High School Band Room, OCR has filed another complaint with the NK School Dept. and they state that "all programs must be completely accessible to all students." I am now working with the school district to correct the problem(remove the existing risers in the band room).

HAVA (Help America Vote Act) Grant - See Election Assistance Committee Report

Please see the report presented by Rory Carmody, Chairperson of the Election Assistance Committee. Also I am working again with the Board of Elections in revisiting more sites, I also have requested that I re-inspect all of the polling sites in the City of Providence, due to so many changes that they have made in their polling places

- Albert A. Tardie

John Desautel, John O. Pastore Center Advisory Committee
Was out on sick leave at their last meeting

Physical Access Complaints
69 letters to complainants (regarding 173 alleged violations) were mailed asking the complainants if they wished to bring their complaints to the hearing board. Three letters were returned undeliverable.

- Nicholas Capobianco, Jr.

Bob Cooper of Scituate, Paratransit Task Force
No meetings in over a year

6:45 PM Other Business:

Members discussed finding a recycling program to participate in, staff will research. MOTION: To join the Education Recycling Center & purchase supplies. AP/RMcM passed.

Adjourned at:	6:55 PM
Resource People:	Harvey Salvas & Albert Tardie (GCD), & Fellows John Kach & Alexander Gomes