



**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**  
**Public Forums**  
**To identify the concerns of people**  
**with**  
**disabilities and their families**

**Thursday July 26, 2007 3:30 – 5:30 pm**

**Warwick Public Library's Community Room**

**600 Sandy Lane, Warwick**

**Governor's Commission on Disabilities**

**John O. Pastore Center – 41 Cherry Dale Court, Cranston, RI 02920-3049**

**Transcript**

LORNA RICCI: Before we start -- attention. I just took a peak at back and only one person has signed up to testify. I really encourage you to think about the issues or concerns or the populations you work with because this information today doesn't stay here. It goes on and representatives see this information. And it actually supports the kinds of issues later on. Let's say you want to call your legislator about a concern of yours. If you are not on record or the people who haven't already testified on record to that issue, your legislator may just say I haven't seen this issue anywhere. So please, I know there's a lot that wish just to listen today. But I encourage you really truly to think about an issue of concern, your own workplace, the people you serve, and really consider giving testimony. And, of course, if you wish to have written testimony submitted, I've got those numbers for you as well. Just giving a few more minutes to sign up if you wish to.

Should we start?

I guess we will get started. I welcome you to the Governor's Commission's Public Forum. I wish to start by thanking all our sponsors of today's event and the events happening all week. I hope everyone picked up a flyer. This gives the -- a little more information on our sponsors today. Please feel free to take it home. And most importantly, there's an address, an e-mail address and a fax number, kind of right in the middle. Should you hear something today you wish to submit public testimony, public testimony will be accepted in writing until July 31st. And the address is right on here. So I encourage you to submit written testimony should you choose to do that.

No glasses -- are glasses back there? I will wait --

FEMALE SPEAKER: You want your glasses, Lorna?

LORNA RICCI: Thank you.

The state government and the sponsoring organizations that have been written up in your flyer want to hear from people with disabilities and their families about their concerns and ideas for improving the lives of all Rhode Islanders with disability.

There's a few rules today. I would like to just say that I hope more people will sign up to testify. We are limiting testimony to five minutes. However, we may be able to give a little more time today since we don't have too many people signed up. But please change your mind, again.

We ask you to state your name clearly and spell it for our CART reporter. All of the testimony today is written down. It will be given to the Governor's Commission and be available in a written format for review, not only by you but

by legislators. This goes to all of our legislators, all testimony that is presented these five days.

I wish to give a few minutes for our panelists to announce -- give their names and where they're from. And after that, we will start.

Just a couple of things. Should you wish to have coffee or something cold, we do have Felicia's right down the way. That's our panelists too, if you would like to get an iced coffee. Rest rooms, they are right to the right. I think that's it.

I would like to get started. I think we will -- I will give the mike. We can go right down if you give your names. Again I thank all our panelists today for coming out for today's public forum.

And then after that, we will hear from our first person who has signed up.

BILL INLOW: Thank you. I am Bill Inlow, the Disability Services Coordinator at Rhode Island Public Transit Authority, RIPTA. I also work closely with the RIDE program. And I'm a member of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities Legislative Committee.

KEN RENAUD: My name is Ken Renaud and I work for PAL and I wear a lot of different hats for PAL. Lately I have been doing a lot of family support for people who have been deemed eligible for services, as well as working on a federal grant to end violence against women with disabilities.

ROBERTA GREENE: Hi, everybody. I am Roberta Greene from the Office Of Rehabilitation Services. I am the coordinator, ticket to work coordinator, planning assistance project coordinator, and special projects coordinator. So nice to have you here.

CHRIS BUTLER: Chris Butler. I am the executive director of In-Sight.

RORY CARMODY: I am Rory Carmody. I chair the Election Access Committee and part of the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project.

KATE SHERLOCK: Hi. I am Kate Sherlock, an attorney from the Rhode Island Disability Law Center. And we have -- every year we are supposed to get our public input. In addition to hearing you here, we have some surveys available next to Alexandra in the back, if you want to take one and mail it to us and put it to writing to us what you are concerned about too. We would appreciate it.

LISA ONORATO: I am Lisa Onorato from the Brain Injury Association.

PAULA PARKER: Hi. I am Paula Parker from the Department of Elderly Affairs. I am the administrator of the Protective Services Unit and I am on the Governor's Commission For Disabilities Legislative Committee.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I am Elaina Goldstein, URI College of Pharmacy, and I would like to let everybody know there are brochures back there on the Sherlock Plan -- versus anything else Sherlock. This is the Medicaid Buy-In for people who work and are eligible for Medicaid. We have this brochure. And we also have -- we have a fact sheet in Spanish for those of you who need Spanish. Please pick them up. Thanks.

COLLEEN ANN POLSELLI: I am Colleen Ann Polselli from the Disability Health Program --

KATE SHERLOCK: I am Kate Sherlock. Again I forgot to mention Alexandra is in the back there with registration forms for anyone who wishes to use today as an opportunity to register to vote. Thanks.

BILL INLOW: Introduce yourself.

SANFORD LUPOVITZ: Good afternoon. Sandy Lupovitz, Governor's Commission on Disabilities.

LORNA RICCI: I wish to thank our panelists. The way we proceed is I will be calling the first person to testify. This is not a debate. It is a public forum. So, when you provide your testimony to our panelists, they may ask for clarifying questions. But there won't be any more conversation really. If you are looking for more input, should you have a concern that one of the panelists could help you with, perhaps they will tell you they could meet with you later to give you some information.

But right now we would like to start by calling up Richard Gaffney. Richard.  
 RICHARD GAFFNEY: You want me to sit down or stand?

Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Richard Gaffney. I am president of the National Federation of the Blind of Rhode Island. And the thing I want to talk about today is also something that was brought up at our national convention and that was access to kiosk machines.

For example, if you go to the airport, if you wanted to print out a boarding pass, if you go to -- it's my understanding that RIPTA has them, where you get information. Any of these places that have these kiosk machines, we don't have access to it because it's all visual. And what we would like to see happen is some legislation introduced that would require places to make these machines be voice activated. There's a lot of blind people out there that use these services. And we think it will be of great help. Thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you, Richard.

Lee Strauss --

LEE STRAUSS: Good afternoon. My name is Lee Strauss and I have problem. I am home bound and disabled from a major stroke and that's why I'm sitting in this mobile chair. Um, and alas, I am home bound because no one will pick me up and take me where I need to go. I have been refused by every entity that I have discovered. Such as -- certainly RIPTA, RIder, Transwick, I am a resident of Warwick. And I have testified before the Senate Transportation Budget at the Senate Transportation Budget Hearing last year, which was sort of a last minute happening because I had no way to get there. I almost didn't get to testify. My granddaughter got some time off of work to take me to the State House. And once we went in where we were told to enter, we were immediately faced with about -- oh, I guess 10 to 12-foot long, very steep ramp which I certainly couldn't navigate and finally was able to snag two State House policemen who managed to push me up in my wheelchair so that I got to eventually to the hearing room and was able to speak there about this problem that I have just been to see you.

The people from RIPTA, the executive assistant director, and various other people who have come to testify on their budget requests for 2007 that day were in the room and heard me tell the details of my problem and my attempts to solve it -- all unsuccessful -- came up to me at the end of the testimony and their heads had been nodding vertically the whole time I had given my testimony. And they were emphatic in their agreement with me. "Yes, Ms. Strauss, you put your finger on it. The trouble is access."

And I said, "and"?

And there was silence. And they said, "well, we've known about the problem for five years".

And I said, "and"?

And there was silence. And since then, they have told me that they have looked at my property. They've come on the property. Although I never knew they did. And they have decided that they can't give me any services because the home in which I am renting does not have properties -- does not have a paved driveway. I found this out in a roundabout way. I was not directly notified that was the problem. However, I have now been told officially that is a problem. It isn't my problem -- I rent. That is not a solution for me to pave it.

I do live in the three quarter guidelines for services; however, no service is forthcoming.

I've tried to contact everyone that are either executive directors of agencies or directors of agencies who provide services to the disabled have recommended that I try. I tried every single one that has ever been suggested to me. And I am no further ahead than when I started when I moved to Rhode Island three years ago.

So, there -- I am perfectly happy to work on the problem. I don't know the scope of the problem because it's never been studied. I am sure my problem is not unique. There have to be many, many Rhode Islanders who do not have access

to the transportation systems that exist. No one knows whether we are 60, 600, or 6,000 people in that kind of situation because no one has never bothered to find out.

I think that the state and the ADA transportation system and RIPTA and RIDE and Transwick, and whatever other systems may be out there that I am not familiar with, although the law says that they are to provide access to transportation so that those of us who are disabled, have a disability that requires transportation, can live normal lives, full lives, active lives in our communities. Although it says so, in my understanding of the law, it's being honored in a breach.

That's why I am here today. I hope someone will have a recommendation for me or a suggestion. I am perfectly happy to work on the problem. I've done community volunteer work all my life. I know how to do it. I am willing to do it. But so far, as someone from an agency again -- not an agency but an organization by name responsible for this -- providing transportation or seeing that it's provided summed up the situation by saying for Rhode Island, no money, no projects, no prospects.

Not a happy thought to leave you with but that's where I'm being left.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you.

Is there any one else who signed up?

Susan? Susan -- anybody else?

SUSAN ELEOFF: Not at this time.

LORNA RICCI: Does anyone wish to?

Oh, Jim, James DeBoer. James.

JAMES DEBOER: Hello. My name is James DeBoer. I am the lead organizer at the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project. And I just want to just give you all a quick update on what we are doing. I don't have a specific complaint or issue to bring to your attention but just to let you know a few of you are involved with the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project, and a few folks in the audience as well.

And the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project was started in really 2005, an initiative funded in part by Help America Vote Act funding to encourage people with disabilities to register to vote, to educate themselves about their candidates, to participate in the elections. It's a nonpartisan alliance. We do not support one particular party or another. We don't support any particular candidates. The thrust is to get out there and for people with disabilities to become even more involved.

Over the last year, we had our founding convention in this room in April. And we had about 100 or so people there. After that, we worked on a bill in the state legislature called Bill 5969 that was going to require publicly financed candidates for statewide office, Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Treasurer, Secretary of State, Attorney General, to put closed captioning on their TV ads because right now many candidates do not even think to put closed captioning on their TV ads, which makes it more difficult for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to find out what's going on.

And the other thing that we -- was required of that bill was to require radio ad transcripts upon request, the radio ads. People could find out what was going on.

So we had a big effort around that and we got 1,082 signatures from the state, submitted the petition, and it passed the state legislature. The governor signed the bill into law on July 3.

So in 2010, encourage all the candidates to run with public financing. And that way they will all have to do closed captioning on their TV ads.

And coming up, we will be working on the presidential primary elections. This is the first time since 1952 when there has neither been a sitting president or a sitting vice president running for election for the presidency. So it's really

an open primary on both sides. So it's a great chance to participate and make your voice heard.

Any questions or -- thank you very much.

BILL INLOW: Yeah, Mr. DeBoer, did I understand you to say that the state law says if you accept public financing, then you are bound by that state law to have captioning?

JAMES DEBOER: That's correct.

BILL INLOW: It seems to me that we should urge candidates for public office to voluntarily comply with the --

JAMES DEBOER: That's a great idea.

BILL INLOW: -- the spirit of that law; and whether or not they're financially dependent on public support that we urge them to comply with the spirit of that law as a gesture of their respect for voters with disabilities.

JAMES DEBOER: Yeah, I agree with that. Absolutely.

BILL INLOW: Thank you.

JAMES DEBOER: Thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Any other questions? Any other testimony?

LORNA RICCI: I think what we will do is we have some wonderful organizations represented here. If you have questions for folks, maybe what we could do is informally have -- if you would like to come up, talk to some of our organizations to find out a little more information about some of them. This might be a good time to use this waiting time while we wait for -- until 5:30 or wait -- hopefully other people will come to testify.

So, we have a little bit of a wait here. Please feel free to just talk among yourselves.

BILL INLOW: Maybe we could reconvene in a half hour --

LORNA RICCI: That's a great idea. What we could do is we could plan on reconvening in probably 15, 20 minutes. And by then if someone else in the room here wishes to sign up, we will hear more testimony then.

(Return from break)

LORNA RICCI: Excuse me. We are going to reconvene in just three, four minutes.

Three, four minute warning.

LORNA RICCI: Okay. Excuse me. We would like to reconvene. We would like to reconvene.

Lights.

Okay. We have two people who have signed up to testify. Janice Lebrun?

JANICE LEBRUN: Yes. Thank you.

I just want to say I really have -- me and my family had a lot of help from the Kent Center. We have a 12 and a 14 year old. One with Asperger's and one with PTNOS. We were going through a very difficult time. And we got children's intensive services, first for one child and then for the other. So we had a whole year of health with therapy in home and as an outpatient.

I just want to go on record saying they were very, very good. Thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you, Janice.

Does anybody have any questions for Janice?

Thank you, Janice.

Linda McCarthy.

Linda.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Hi. My name is Linda McCarthy and I work for East Bay CASSP. And I just want to jump off what she was talking about with behavioral health as opposed to children with disabilities. One of the programs that are involved in our program under CASSP, we have the Children's East Bay Mental Health -- oh, my God -- sorry. I told him I wasn't going to be able to talk today because I have been in a workshop all day but I'm just kind of brain dead. Under the umbrella of our organization, right now we have CASSP which is Child and Adolescent Services Program. We have an enhanced CASSP which works with children who are going to -- on the verge of being in residential or have just come out of

residential placement. We have the PEP which is the Positive Education Program. And we have the Project Hope Program.

And I'm just curious as to where in the system of care the process is that involves the children between the ages of 17 and 21. I haven't read anything in the paper in the past two days. And I was just kind of informed that there might have been somewhere as to where these kids are going to be placed. I know as of now if a child of the age of 17 is convicted, he will no longer -- or she will no longer be going into the Rhode Island Training School. She will be -- or he will be going into the ACI. Has that law passed? I guess that's a question that I'm wondering if anybody has -- can answer that for me. Do we know if that's been --

SANFORD LUPOVITZ: How does that relate to disabilities?

LINDA MCCARTHY: It does. Because right now children with disabilities, even though they are not children with physical disabilities, they are children with emotional and behavioral disabilities are now being placed out of their residential care, out of their foster care system. Children that were under the umbrella of being able to be supported until the age of 21 will no longer be cared for until that age. So, they may not have the physical disability but they have the emotional disability. Children with autism. Children that are being carried by elderly parents that because -- I mean, in my care we have children that -- parents have more than one child with disabilities. And I know they are not physical disabilities, but autism is still a disability.

And so I'm just concerned that we have children that are fallen by the wayside because of the new changes in the law. And I was just wondering if there was anybody here that knew of the changes that had come about for the children? Was there anybody that read anything on that recently? Can you address that?

RORY CARMODY: Those were budgetary recommendations.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Has it passed?

RORY CARMODY: I don't know if it passed, but it is going in that direction. The intent is people who are convicted of a crime, 17 will be treated as adults.

LINDA MCCARTHY: How about the children who have been in residential and foster care and being taken care of by the state until the age of 21? They are no longer going to be taken care of --

RORY CARMODY: I believe some monies were restored to that program. There is also a threat again that that program, going away or losing funds.

LINDA MCCARTHY: I know under the umbrella of this program, ours is being -- DCYF and DHS are the two systems. We are funded under DCYF and under our care. They're changing our program to include early intervention. So now what we are doing is we are looking at the local level ages of 0 to 3. But we are forgetting about the teens. So I just wanted to kind of bring that up.

And I had one more thing. Respite care. We have a lot of families. And respite is almost like a word that isn't even available any more for children and families. Respite to the families that are taking care of children with disabilities, and whether it be physical disabilities or emotional disabilities. So, thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you, Linda. Any questions for Linda?

KEN RENAUD: I have a question for Linda.

LORNA RICCI: Linda.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes? A question for me. Okay.

KEN RENAUD: Ken Renaud from PAL. I want to clarify the respite question with you a little bit. So you are saying that people aren't able to access respite?

LINDA MCCARTHY: No, they are not.

KEN RENAUD: So they are going through social workers to try to access respite? Or --

LINDA MCCARTHY: The waiting list for home based therapeutic services or the respite is about a year and a half right now for anyone. And if you have -- in some cases, I have families that have two or three children with disabilities,

and autism -- I mean now, you know the percentage rate is what? One in 160 something. And in Rhode Island I believe it's higher than that. So you are going to run into a lot of families that are so in need of respite. And if we can't find the support mechanism that surrounds them, if they don't have that natural support in place, and mentors are far and few between. We are just talking about whole group of families, whether they have disabilities with -- a physical disability or an emotional disability -- is very little respite for families.

KEN RENAUD: I think a suggestion could be -- other than contacting legislators, obviously, so that they are aware of the issue, might be to make sure this Dr. Ella Nelson's office knows about that. She is posting stake holder meetings around the state for folks that are accessing services. So, that sounds like to me a suggestion that could be made to the Innovations Committee, which is really good information for that committee to have.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You were sitting here with no one to talk to.

RORY CARMODY: It worked out well.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I got up --

RORY CARMODY: Those committees are listed on MHRH's website. Those committees and work groups that Dr. Nelson is -- they are open to the public. And I think with HBTS we are a provider in Cranston. There's a lot -- our capacity and being able to find individuals within the program.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Most definitely.

RORY CARMODY: So perhaps things are not outreached to recruit young mentors even in the senior, high school -- college.

LINDA MCCARTHY: That is one thing we are working on, getting children mentors. We are trying to address it through the senior high schools and children that have to -- the first year of college that have to meet certain curriculum and to try to get them involved in that.

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Linda? My name is Heidi Showstead and I just thought of something that might be able to help kids on the cusp, so to speak. And I don't know if there's any programs involved. But I do know that if you can get children that either have had juvenile offenses or are kind of on that -- the fence, if you will -- involved in some sort of pet training or grooming or pet therapy. It really helps them to learn responsibility for others, to bond with the animals, and to have the guidance of a friend, so to speak. To have something that is dependent on them, even if it's a couple of times a week, will give them another focus and perhaps more career avenues.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Thank you. That's something I will definitely -- when I go to family planning team meetings -- see if we can address that with families and see if we can get them moving in that direction because behavioral issues are involved around that. And if we can get them to work with animals.

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: I know -- I watch a lot of public access programs. And I know it works in women's prisons and it works with a lot of other mentoring programs. So why not have a positive push towards that to help the children in Rhode Island?

LINDA MCCARTHY: There's definitely a positive push in Rhode Island now with the PBIS schools, the public based schools, positive based schools, and the positive approach to how teachers are working with children. Positive approach is definitely coming back. I mean it's not a new concept. It's something that we've known for how many years. But it is definitely coming back.

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Because I do know that -- I've seen in motion animals especially the cats and dogs have the ability to really change people's lives and to put them on the right path. I would like to see some more of that happening for our youth.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Most definitely, Heidi, especially with all these animals who have no homes right now. I don't think you expected your panel to go in this direction.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: That's okay.

COLLEEN ANN POLSELLI: I can address the respite issue and -- me -- hi, I am Colleen -- I don't think this is on -- Colleen from the Rhode Island Department of Health, Office of Special Healthcare Needs. And I'm also on the Cedar Interdepartmental Team. So I am at DHS one day a week. So anyway, regarding the respite. There was up to date a limited respite program. And there were no slots available for children with special health care needs birth to 21. So that would be whether they had emotional, physical behavioral, okay. Now they did receive a waived DHS and they are taking applications for respite.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Oh, thank you.

COLLEEN ANN POLSELLI: So I don't know if that's on-line. You can get the applications from a Cedar Family Center.

LINDA MCCARTHY: I am very -- we work hand in hand.

COLLEEN ANN POLSELLI: They have the applications. Contact DHS, Paul Choquette. Regarding the HBTS list, they have just, you know, they have been working on the HBTS list, seeing if there's duplicates, going back to see if families still need the services or want them. So they are really working their way down. So it's much smaller. I think it may be down to about a year wait. There's also several new providers that have been approved. So it still will go in order. So there's some hope there. But definitely they are taking the applications now.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Because it is being heard. I mean, there's a lot of families. If you don't take care of families that are taking care of children with needs, then the whole system ends up breaking down because you have one support mechanism, the mom or the aunt or the uncle or godmother or -- whoever. And they are the ones that need the respite. They are the ones that need to function on an --

COLLEEN ANN POLSELLI: Slots are limited. I think about 300.

LINDA MCCARTHY: I'm sure they are.

COLLEEN ANN POLSELLI: Some are already committed. So now is the time.

LINDA MCCARTHY: Well, I have two Cedar workers that I can contact on Monday. Thank you for that. Thank you very much.

KATE SHERLOCK: I work with the 18 to 21 year old. If any of them have disabilities and are not getting the support services that they need, they can call us. We are still not sure how much we are going to be able to do depending on the demand. But we are willing to look at those -- we are willing to look at those cases. So any of those folks can call the --

LINDA MCCARTHY: So this other than -- an access one --

KATE SHERLOCK: It can be any disabilities. It can --

LINDA MCCARTHY: That's a criteria for meeting the CASSP needs too is a disability. Thank you so much

KATE SHERLOCK: You are welcome. Thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Well, next person is Paulette Brusso.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Good afternoon. My name is Paulette Brusso, member of the board of AG Bell -- can you hear me?

LORNA RICCI: You need to talk right into it.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Paulette --

LORNA RICCI: You have to get close.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Now, is that okay?

My name is Paulette Brusso. I am a member of the board of AG Bell Rhode Island chapter and also I'm here as a grandparent for my five-year old grandchild who is hearing impaired. I would like to bring to the attention of all of you the need and concern of parents who are looking for an auditory oral option for education for their children who are hearing impaired. We are very happy that a program has been started at -- it's a state program that has been started. It's housed at Orchid Farm School. And it's a kindergarten -- a preschool kindergarten program. But now my grandchild is being mainstreamed into the regular kindergarten in Cranston. And I know several of the other parents are concerned that as their children grow -- so to speak -- grow out of this

program, there isn't going to be any follow up. And this is something that we need to address as the children get older.

It was a very effective program while they are in their preschool years. But we are going to need to be addressing the concerns and needs that these kids are going to have as they go into the mainstream. We are going to need training. We are going to need faculty. We are going to need, you know, support all the way through until their high school years. I don't know if people are aware of that. I know some of the parents who are in the program haven't gotten a lot of support from their school systems.

Any questions?

RORY CARMODY: Paulette, have you been involved with the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or what their position is?

PAULETTE BRUSSO: I have been to some of their meetings. But I don't know what their position is on this matter.

RORY CARMODY: It would be something I would be interested in -- Steve Florio, his group. They may have more information, especially around advocacy issues. I know they work with the school department. Office of Rehab Services have folks who work with the deaf and hearing impaired too. But I think they get involved with kids more at 14 --

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Right.

RORY CARMODY: -- in transition. But it might be a place to start as well.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: This program started as preschool.

RORY CARMODY: Right. But you want to be able to carry those services throughout.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Right. Now who would be -- which one of you would be representative of addressing education issues? I don't know how -- where you are going -- you are just getting questions.

RORY CARMODY: We are getting questions. And we will file the data, the information. And try to direct some of those questions to those people, the Commission on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing or --

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Well, there is the Department of Education does have a special unit on -- what she is asking so there is actually an agency that has a special unit for taking issues. David Ciamco, if you want a name. He is a good person at the Department of Ed's contact.

KATE SHERLOCK: And we represent children with special needs regarding their education as well. We have very limited priority. We actually have been looking at a related issue as a potential systemic issue. So please feel free to give us a call.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Okay. And what is --

KATE SHERLOCK: From the Rhode Island Disability Law Center.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: I work with -- she is on the Bell of -- AG Bell. She is the president. In fact, I am representing her right now because she is just traveling, just coming home from a trip.

But I think when this program was originated two years ago, when we met as a group of parents, we were all given the understanding that the program would follow the kids all the way through their education. And now I'm not sure exactly what the problem is.

There were two classes, two oral programs or classes at Orchid Farm. Now there is one. They took the teachers -- put them back at the School for the Deaf. I don't know why. That's neither here or there. But the question is really -- continuing services and also getting the information out to parents because we are finding from AG Bell and just people that we talk to in early intervention. I don't know if people are aware that oral auditory education for the deaf and hearing impaired is another option. They seem to be getting information from -- I don't know who is giving -- or family services or whoever they get the information from that the only option that they have is the School for the Deaf.

And early intervention people don't seem to be aware that there is another option. I would like to ensure that that information's spread.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Next I would like to call Linda Bradley. Linda Bradley?

LINDA BRADLEY: One minute.

LORNA RICCI: If anyone has heard anything today that you agree with, you might want to sign up to testify that you agree with one of the issues that has been mentioned.

LINDA BRADLEY: Okay. Thank you. My name is Linda Bradley. And I am a Home Access Coordinator at OSCIL. And I just want to let folks know how tight it is out there. I know you heard that before. But the home modification program. I currently have a two-year waiting list for people for -- sometimes simple home modifications such as, you know, changing doors, changing steps, adding rails to allow them safe egress to and from their home. Our equipment money is less than it was when I started at OSCIL.

And I wanted to stress too that sometimes when I go out, I'm always looking -- I have a Scottish heritage, so I am always looking at the most economical way to do things and I do look at that very closely. If a person can use a piece of equipment or a less expensive modification, I certainly, you know, let them know that we are going to do the most cost effective solution.

So, we look at very, very closely. I think Lorna will agree. I'm kind of a master at that.

Also that -- a lot of the people own their own homes. A lot of the older folks. Their mortgages are paid off. They are living on SSI. They don't want to go to a nursing home. They want to stay home. And perhaps they're on such a tight budget because of the medications, because of just the way everything is more expensive, they cannot even afford to take out a second mortgage or a loan, even a low interest loan to do some of these modifications.

And again, we try to come up with some creative ways to help them with their problems.

The other thing was sort of related to the woman that had spoken about the problem with the bus access. I actually had spoken with Sue, who's our information and referral person at OSCIL about that case. And again, just trying to think outside the box, what else could we do there. And I had wondered if something could be done, such as like a board walk or a ramp or, you know, what is the policy? Is it that the driveway has to be paved? Or does it have to be not dirt? Does anybody know the answer?

BILL INLOW: It has to be safe.

LINDA BRADLEY: A-ha.

BILL INLOW: For the customer as well as for the other passengers in the vehicle.

LINDA BRADLEY: Okay. Is it the place where the person gets on to the bus that's in question or where the bus has to drive to?

BILL INLOW: Where the bus has to drive to.

LINDA BRADLEY: Okay.

BILL INLOW: It has to be safe for all occupants of the vehicle.

LINDA BRADLEY: So it doesn't have to be tar -- paved?

BILL INLOW: It does not.

LINDA BRADLEY: All right. Well, that's interesting.

Sometimes with the rental situation, it's a difficult thing, even with our program. You know, working with the Governor's Commission on Disability, Harvey Salvas has been wonderful with helping us with some difficult situations recently. And you know, finding out and letting people know that if they are in a rental situation, their landlord cannot block their right to have that modification on the home.

However, they don't have to pay for it. They can -- they can make the tenant pay for it or say, well, I can't afford that so you have to pay for it. But they can't block it.

KATE SHERLOCK: They may have the tenant return it to its original condition.

LINDA BRADLEY: That's right. Yes. But usually with modifications that happen, usually the landlords are more than happy to have those modifications down because now they have an accessible apartment to rent. Or it has taken a set of old steps and it has changed those old steps into a nice smooth ramp for people to go up, or whatever.

So, you know, that's a tricky one. That's a tricky one because people renting cannot afford these modifications. So we do look at those extremely carefully.

So, I think that's pretty much all I wanted to say today.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Can I address? You know all the work we are trying to do with home modifications and understanding all of what's out there?

LINDA BRADLEY: Right.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Rhode Island Housing took the lead on trying to get that home modification bond bill passed. And it's come to a point that they have two or three programs at Rhode Island Housing that they feel will help people do home modifications, aside from what you guys get from ORS to OSCIL. So she sent out a survey that she wants people to fill out. So I will -- give me your e-mail address. I will forward it to you.

LINDA BRADLEY: Great.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Because you might want to fill out her -- you might have better information than I do on some of the questions that she's asking.

LINDA BRADLEY: Okay.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Then find out what we want to do is put all of these home modifications places -- because MHRH is not here today but they also have a home modification loan program that Rhode Island Housing administers. So we still have to talk to them to see how that all works. But your programs work a little bit different than the other ORS programs, for people getting back to work, which I'm sure are different than the ones at MHRH, which also work different than the ones -- the other ones that Rhode Island Housing. But it needs to be clear that there's just not one place where people can go.

LINDA BRADLEY: Right.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: That's possibilities. Maybe some of these people on a one or two-year waiting list, one of these other programs might be suitable.

LINDA BRADLEY: And I should say we do look at that. And again Sue is very, very up to date on a lot of that. She -- I go to her all the time to find alternatives. Sometimes even before they come to me, they've already been given information about -- well, try this. Try this. Try this. We do know some of them. But any other stuff is great.

PAULA PARKER: I also wanted to mention that for elderly folks, the purpose of a reverse mortgage is to help them stay in their home. And if they are interested in that, it's nothing that has to be paid back until they either pass away or the house is sold. But the origin of reverse mortgages was just that, to either help elders pay their taxes so they could stay at home or to help them modify their home so they could stay there. And certainly there are a few banks that offer them. And it's one option for people who need that kind of assistance.

LINDA BRADLEY: We had also had a small forum here -- when did we do that? In April. And we had some representatives from different agencies. And what we're telling folks as far as reverse mortgages is to be very, very careful. We recommend, you know, calling Rhode Island Housing to get information. Get information before you sign up with somebody because you could get -- you know, shistered by one of these, you know, will give you anything you want type of places. So they --

PAULA PARKER: The department had introduced legislation this year to protect people who are getting reverse mortgages. We drafted a bill and it had a lot of

safeguards in it for counseling and disclosure. The National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association from Washington flew their lobbyists and lawyers up to Rhode Island. And although our bill passed in the House, it stopped in the Senate. So we are going back in the fall. And we have been promised that this year we will have a bill. But it's clearly the product as the baby boomers start aging where there are going to be a lot of private products developed and without regulation safeguards will be in the same predatory situation that we have -- so --

LINDA BRADLEY: Very true.

SANFORD LUPOVITZ: In your dealings with people who own their home and want to remain there.

LINDA BRADLEY: Yes?

SANFORD LUPOVITZ: Are you using the telephone dialer systems to automatically call police, ambulance, fire?

LINDA BRADLEY: We often will recommend some sort of emergency response system, depending on the person's abilities. Some folks already have them in place. But we do let them know about the ATEL program, also where they can -- perhaps a person can't utilize a regular phone because of fine motor difficulties, whatever. So yeah, we do make sure that they have that sort of thing in place, if that's needed, definitely. Yeah. That's a very important part of being home alone because you are not going to have somebody there all the time. It's a peace of mind for them and for their families and caretakers.

BILL INLOW: I would like to pick up on the previous comment that is made about state legislation because these hearings do have an impact on -- I'm Bill Inlow from RIPTA -- have an impact on state legislation. I think it's good to be very concerned and cautious about reversing annuity mortgages and other instruments that take advantage of the equity that people, elders have in their homes. At the same time, I think it's very important not to lose sight of the fact that given the budget constraints at the federal and state level, that we need to help this generation of elder people take advantage of that enormous amount of equity that is in their homes, to help them stay in those homes.

And again, especially given constraints on the federal and state budget. If we don't find a way to find some resources for home care and other kind supports for frail elders to remain in their homes, we will be in a great deal of trouble. It's good to be cautious about reverse annuity mortgages. But it's important that we take advantage of that incredibly enormous amount of equity that elders have in their homes. And I really think that's important.

LINDA BRADLEY: I have to add to that -- sort of tongue in cheek, I guess. I live with my 86 year old mother and she has plenty of equity in her house. But she also lived through the depression. She's not going to touch that (LAUGHTER)

BILL INLOW: She may have to leave her home, which is a real shame.

LINDA BRADLEY: I think she would if she absolutely was backed against the wall. But you know, here I am living with her and I do this for a living and she doesn't want to change things.

You know --

KEN RENAUD: Sometimes I wonder when people make comments that there's possibilities of taking some folks that have had some success with that, you know. They've done the reverse mortgage. They've had success. They are of that generation to tell, you know, their peers and people in their own generation that -- the story of how it helped them.

LINDA BRADLEY: Yeah.

KEN RENAUD: So the education component on top of it, I think, is important as well.

LINDA BRADLEY: Well, I've done a few talks out in the community to, you know, church groups, senior groups. And those are always very informative to tell folks about, you know, the alternatives. And even just like I was saying earlier, some of the equipment that you can use in lieu of a major modification. So, I think education is a big part of it, definitely. I think we are planning

to do another one of those home modification things next year. So, look for that. We will send it around to everybody. So --

ROBERTA GREENE: Adding to that too, it's a quality of life issue that people ultimately have to make a decision about.

LINDA BRADLEY: Yeah. It's really tough when you get there and you have to say, wow, I'm to the age now where I can't stay in my home or I have to think about that. It is -- and we may all get there.

KATE SHERLOCK: We hope we do.

LINDA BRADLEY: Yeah, really.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you, Linda.

Any one else?

We have -- we don't have any one else officially signed up.

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Lorna --

LORNA RICCI: We do.

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: I just -- this is Heidi Showstead again. And I just want to say one quick thing. I notice with a lot of people what happens is when you are looking for getting jobs and employment and you are on a certain amount -- say you have a certain type of benefit or whatever. There's not a lot of collaboration between the agencies in the state. Like you go to one benefits specialist with the same qualifications. I get such and such benefit. Blah-blah blah. And they will tell you that one thing is okay and you are all set. And then you will go some place else and they will tell you a different story. And I think that happens with not only with work benefits and things like that, but also with the services that children receive in the schools. There's not a lot of collaboration between organizations. Rather you're just starting out in life or you are elderly. And I think it all starts with equal partnerships, collaborations for everybody involving all ages in life and all areas of independent living. That's what I think we need in the state is to work towards working more together as partners as opposed to separately.

LORNA RICCI: All set? Does anyone have any questions for Heidi?

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Who are you getting different information from?

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Just in general, you get -- just in general, like if you go and you have a certain parameter and just a hypothetical situation because I know it happens to a lot of my friends. You know, you want to work part-time and you -- say you can make such and such amount. Then you try to do it and you have issues with benefits. Or there's a parent that wants to give their child the best education. And you know, one school department will work with the parents. Another school department will say it's not their responsibility. And it happens across the board, no matter what your age. And I just don't like to see that happening. I want equal access, equal collaboration, equal communication --

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I think the problem is not collaboration. I think the problem is that there are people giving information that don't have the accurate information. That's the problem. Now, ORS have benefits counselors. They are the benefits counselors in the state. And they are the people you need to talk to about that. It's what they are trained for and they spend a lot of time, a lot of energy, and they are going out. Roberta Greene down there heads up the whole group and they go out and try to train as many people as they can who are giving information directly to people to make sure they are giving them the right information. And that is the problem. It's not that people aren't working collaboratively. It's that some people are giving information that don't have the accurate information. And they don't know where to go to get the best information or to suggest you go. Do you know what I'm saying?

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Right. But my point is that it's not just one area of life. It extends anything from early childhood education all the way to the end of life and elderly and dependence and respite. And I think that everybody just needs to make sure that they are getting and giving the right amount of information and

that they are all on the same page to benefit the lives of people that need assistance in the state.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Right. And what I'm saying to you is this issue is being addressed and it's addressed by creating the people who have the expertise. For example, do you know about the Point?

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Yes.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Okay. The Point is an entity that has trained people on multiple areas. So you call them and if they don't know the answer, they know where to send you. So that's supposed to be helping people find the right information. I don't know how you control somebody giving out misinformation. I think what we can try to do is get better, better outreach materials so that people know where the right place to call is for the accurate information.

And that's sort of -- you know --

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: Thank you.

LORNA RICCI: Any one else?

Would anyone else like to comment on anything that's been said, perhaps something that you agree with? Linda.

LINDA: I agree with Heidi --

LORNA RICCI: Hold on, Linda.

LINDA: I don't need a microphone.

LORNA RICCI: I know.

LINDA: I agree with Heidi in one aspect that in the schools, it is not the same across the board. I work with two neighboring communities and what is a qualification for one school system is not a qualification for another school system. Same exact child has moved from one area to another area to get the services that they need. So, just a comment on what she says. With the educational piece that I know that the qualifications are not the same from school system to school system. So I don't know if that's where she had gone with that, for the educational piece.

LORNA RICCI: Does anyone wish to comment?

Are there any other comments of anything that's been said today?

Agreement, disagreement?

I would like to emphasize that everything that is being recorded is going to go to the Governor's Commission on Disability. Many of the people here, the panelists and other people who are interested organizations will be reviewing all the information. The Governor's Commission prioritizes the different testimony and begins to address ten to 12 -- we have someone who has been with the commission longer than I have -- they address -- try to look at the -- probably the most common kinds of concerns and begin to take those on and address them in the state.

I have to say that a couple years ago we heard testimony for the first time really on abuse against people with disabilities. You know, we have DCYF for children. We have DEA, elder abuse. We did not have any organization or any entity that would take cases between -- let's see. 22? 22 to 64 and a half (LAUGHTER)

PAULA PARKER: 60. We take 60.

LORNA RICCI: That group in there. And someone testified very eloquently that went -- as I just said. It became public -- it became written down. We looked at it. The Governor's Commission brought that forth as something they wished to put on their own priority list. Two years later, last year it became law. There now is a department that's looking into those cases. So testimony that happens here that you might be thinking what goes -- what happens with it after this. I have to tell you, it continues on.

Another wonderful point. Anything that's mentioned here today, again, becomes a record. The Governor's Commission on Disabilities sends it to all the legislators. They all have it.

Now three months down the road, one of you talks to your own legislator and says, you know, there really needs to be more -- better transportation. Your legislator will then say to you, is this an issue that really impacts a lot of people? You can now say, I heard it mentioned many times at the public forums. I know it's written down. You can see it for yourself.

It gives you credibility. It gives you a backup that this issue has been mentioned before. So, again, maybe a little sales pitch here. But I really encourage you, if you are here listening today, maybe representing an organization and you heard something that really -- you know will impact your own folks that you are serving, please take a second. Just to go on record that you agree with the need to look into this issue or that issue.

Public service announcement here.

With that, would anyone like to testify?

Do I see a hand? I see a hand. Yes.

Your name, please. Paulette Brusso.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: I have a question about what you just said in terms of addressing the concerns that were brought to the panel. Are the items that are selected chosen by the number of people that they affect? Because in the example that I just gave, that's a very small population. Number one, the deaf population is a small population. And then the subgroup of people who want an auditory oral option for their children is even smaller subgroup of that group. So, is the decision being made to select the things that are addressed based on the number of people that it affects?

RORY CARMODY: Sometimes it's looked at by themes. Like transportation applies to a lot of folks. Disabilities access. When you talk about voting not just encouraging people to register to vote and vote but voting equipment is accessible, polling places are accessible, that the campaign ads are accessible. So it really goes around themes. We look at that broad category. But under it, certainly issues that are relative to your grandson.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I can make a suggestion. I sit on the Legislative Committee for the Commission. That's where all of -- not all of it but many of the things that may be legislative action would go to the Legislative Committee. And what gets taken up is determined by the people on that Legislative Committee. Now that committee is -- I'm not -- I come -- anybody can come to that Legislative Committee. So if there is an issue that you really are very interested in seeing something, you can go to the Legislative Committee on the Commission and make the case before the Committee in addition to this, as a stronger case. And that way the commitment and the strength of people wanting to see something happen that really makes it happen. Not necessarily the numbers that are affected.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Would you be able to give me that information in terms of when --

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Chris?

CHRISTINE RANCOURT: They are posted on the Secretary of State's website. So you can find out -- about any meeting that the Commission holds by going into the Secretary of State website.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: When you say 'commission' which commission?

CHRISTINE RANCOURT: The Governor's Commission on Disabilities.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: It meets once a month, usually Monday --

RORY CARMODY: I can't remember which --

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: You will see it on there. Where the Commission's office is, which is in the Howard Pastore Center.

RORY CARMODY: Near the new trial court.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: Where the fires were. They were okay.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Or electricity.

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I invite you to come.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: The lady from the Sherlock Center for Disabilities, I can't see your name. Kate --

KATE SHERLOCK: My name is Sherlock but I actually work at the Disability Law Center.

PAULETTE BRUSSO: Oh, okay. I thought I saw someone here from the Sherlock Disability Center.

LORNA RICCI: The information that you are looking for is right here. Did everyone take one of these at the registration table?

Right in the middle gives phone numbers, addresses, where to contact. I believe the website is on here for any information on the Governor's Commission on Disability. And the priorities -- and please correct me, those who have been on the Commission longer than I have. Once the priorities are put in writing, these are the priorities of the Governor's Commission. There is chance for public comment, correct?

So, the priorities I think are put right on the website for people to see. So you can see if -- but all the testimony I believe will be on the website. Do you have any idea Chris when it will be published?

CHRISTINE RANCOURT: When it will be out?

LORNA RICCI: It's a while.

CHRISTINE RANCOURT: It takes a while because we wait for the CART reporter to get the information to us. As Rory indicated, we have to theme it out. So it does take a little bit of time. So I can't tell you three weeks from today. But --

LORNA RICCI: You may want to check on it -- what's this month? This is -- the fall -- perhaps the fall?

CHRISTINE RANCOURT: By the fall.

LORNA RICCI: Ready by the fall. You can check the Governor's Commission's website and see the testimony as Chris has said. You will see everything right there.

Any one else like to testify?

Any comments?

Well, we are here until 5:30. Perhaps we can reconvene just about 5 or 5:25. Unless we see more people come in, we will announce that we are reconvening at that time. Give time for people to talk. Again there's wonderful expertise right here in the room.

(Return from break)

LORNA RICCI: Excuse me. We have just a couple of other people that wish to go on record. I will ask some of the panelists who have anything they would like to (inaudible) Ken Renaud. We will be ending right at 5:30.

KEN RENAUD: I would just like -- my name is Ken Renaud. I would like to go on record by supporting comments that Richard had had regarding the kiosk, the inaccessibility of kiosk for people that are blind. I think that as well as people that are blind, some kiosks are not universally designed for all people in general. And that it -- I really believe that it is the wave of the future with technology. You see kiosks popping up all over the place, in airports, netWORK Rhode Island has kiosks now that are put there by Providence Journal. It's only classifieds from Projo. But I used it with some folks with developmental disabilities and it's very easy for them to navigate. But if somebody doesn't see, they would have to have somebody there with them. So I just kind of wanted to support Richard in his notion that there should be some attention being paid. Because when new technology comes out, it's a great thing. But if you have to retrofit things, you know, that's going to take three, four times longer to have things retrofitted so it's accessible for all people.

SANFORD LUPOVITZ: Is the technology there? Is it available?

KEN RENAUD: Is the technology there for kiosks to be voice activated? I believe so. Is Richard still here?

Richard can speak to that.

RICHARD GAFFNEY: Right. Most anything that comes out in the way of technology nowadays can be made to produce speech. So the technology is there. What they

would have to do, if they need help, they could work with our national office and they would be able to help them out.

But as I said earlier, you know, as Ken says, this could be a real problem. In fact, it's getting to be a problem for a lot of us. And it's going to become a real serious situation if we don't do something soon. It will be a real crisis to try to do it once all the machines are installed. It's a lot easier to do it when you are building from the ground up than to have everything built and then go back and have to do it again. It can be done. But it's a lot more difficult.

Any other questions?

Thanks, Ken.

LORNA RICCI: Thank you, Richard.

Was there someone else on the panel that wanted to speak?

Yes. You need to yell out.

SANFORD LUPOVITZ: You already spoke.

LORNA RICCI: What is your name --

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I didn't talk about Rhodes to Independence. I will talk about Rhodes to Independence.

Yeah. I would like to talk to people about what Rhodes to Independence is. I don't know how many of you have ever heard of who we are. We are basically, to be honest, a grant, a federal grant. But it's a systems change federal grant. And we attempt to work on a variety of different issues that our main purpose is to help people become -- with disabilities -- become competitively employed, which means to be able to get actual jobs that make a living wage and help get out of poverty, get off of SSI, get off of Social Security disability, and be able to work and not lose your healthcare or other benefits that you need. So, when I was talking about the Sherlock Plan, the Medicaid Buy-In, that's one of the first projects that we were involved with in getting that legislation passed. We have been doing a lot of work on housing issues. And we have been working on the issue of home modifications. And we have been working on another issue about housing registry. This is for people to know where they can get -- whether it's a rental unit or a house that is accessible. And accessible defined in a very broad way. Rhode Island Housing, we are very, very close now to contracting with a wonderful organization that has an amazing web based system that will help what happens here in Rhode Island. Because in Rhode Island right now you have to go to individual counties to sign up for their housing. This would be one integrated place where all the information is for all the different -- any city in Rhode Island. And the information about the types of accessibility, not just let's say mobile accessibility but any other types of accessibility. It's really a fabulous product. And they are in the cogs of state government now with the RFP process. But really hopefully the beginning of next year that should be hopefully up and running, which would be really helpful for people to be able to know of other rental units where they could go if their current rental unit is not accessible.

The home modification loan program, which we had legislation out there, because of the budget crisis in the state, it's just really seems to be incredibly difficult to get even another bond passed. As I said a little bit before, Rhode Island Housing is taking the lead. And what we are doing -- we are doing a systems study to find out all the different programs that are out there, home modification programs. Who's eligible. How somebody needs -- what they need to go through to get that home modification. Because it's very different depending on where you are going. So we are going to try to make that much more of a system. So that people know that there's a hierarchy depending on your income, on where you can go, to actually get some help to get financing or -- and who actually will do the home modification for you.

Because there's a lot of issues out there from what we understand, from ORS, there's not that many builders or construction people that are bidding to do a lot of these jobs. And that seems to be a problem that has been surfacing here.

So if -- you might have money. You might have -- but if you don't have somebody to actually do the home modification, it's not going to get done. So we are kind of looking at it from a systemic standpoint to see what the problems are and do something about it.

On the transportation issue, it's probably the most frustrating issue that we have worked with at Rhodes to Independence. We got a grant from one of the transportation associations in Washington. And those people were supposed to do a lot of technical assistance for us. But it was very clear when I went to a five day -- it was intense where I didn't know a lot about how public transportation is developed in other states. And to understand how the structure, the infrastructure for public transportation in other states is very, very different than the infrastructure here.

Regarding strategic planning. RIPTA is a provider of public transportation. And so much has been put on to RIPTA's shoulders as far as strategic planning, and everything else under the sun has been sort of delegated over to RIPTA without the funding to really be able to do everything that they have been asked to do.

Other states have a Department of Transportation that's either involved with the strategic planning or they have a department in the administration that is in charge of strategic planning. So that's one of the areas that we really felt was in need to sort of get more -- somebody within state government to be more actively involved in the general strategic planning for public transportation across the board.

And there's a coalition that -- one of the environmental groups put together and there's study after study. There was another study that was done this year on transportation issues. So, figuring out what we need to do to get it out of the studying phase and into changing the way the system works is sort of the big, big issue that needs to be addressed, especially for people with disabilities and senior citizens, and to be honest with you, anybody who really doesn't have a car in this state. So many people who are on the welfare system need public transportation. And then there's the environmental groups who want to use public transportation. So that becomes the broader issue, not just for people with disabilities who need to use public transportation but for the rest of the state.

So, anybody out there who has ideas on how to address this issue, wants to address the issue, we are going to take another stab at this next year and see what we can do with -- it continues to be an issue that's brought up. I think we've identified what the problem is. So now it's a matter of really trying to get some people around the table who can really make the difference and making something happen.

LORNA RICCI: Ding! (LAUGHTER)

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I am going to have my friend Paula talk the point.

LORNA RICCI: Actually we are done. (LAUGHTER)

We are done.

I encourage you to go to the website. Governor's Commission on Disabilities website around the fall -- or maybe soon you can check it for testimony that you've heard today. And I thank you all for coming. And probably same time, same place next year. And that's it. Good night. (APPLAUSE)