



Description of graphic: RI State Seal an anchor in gold behind a blue wheelchair logo. Just below is a blue banner with the state motto "Hope". All are in the center of a ring of 8 blue stars, in groups of 2 separated by the logos for Braille, hearing aids, low vision and amplified phone.

Governor's Commission on Disabilities Legislation Committee's Public Forum Employment Working Group

Wednesday September 28, 2011 1-2:30 PM

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

(voice) 401-462-0100 (fax) 462-0106 (tty) via RI Relay 711

(e-mail) disabilities@gcd.ri.gov

(website) www.disabilities.ri.gov

 meeting graphic	<p>Attendees: Roger Harris, Convener; Linda Deschenes; & Theresa Thaelke, Chris</p> <p>Absentees: Rosemary C. Carmody</p> <p>Staff: Emily Crowell, Fellow</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

	Agenda Topics	Moderator/Leader	Time
 meeting graphic	<p>Public Forums on the Concerns of People with Disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review the Employment Related Testimony; ➤ Identify the Concerns; and <p>Recommend Solutions</p>	<p>Roger Harris, Convener</p>	<p>1:00</p>
<p>Purpose/Goal: To identify the employment concerns and recommend solutions addressing those concerns.</p>			
<p>Discussion: In developing solutions take into consideration the following: infrastructure & resourcing; guidance & coordination; quality control; information & referral; professional development & credentialing; & quality of life.</p>			

General Employment Testimony

Starting on Page 60, Middletown Forum:

STEPHANIE SCHMIDT: I'm a hearing impaired person. Are there others here that need to read my lips? Anyone? Okay, I'm speaking for myself and I am a member of HLAA which is the Hearing Loss Association of America as a disability group. I'm what is known as a "late-deafened adult" I have a cochlear implant that is how I hear, when it is off my ear I am 100% stone-cold Deaf while I speak like a normal person because I was fully hearing until my 30s when I started to go deaf. I wanted to represent people like myself, who have hearing impairments, whether it is deafness or hearing loss with a hearing aid or hearing loss unaided. We have an enormous group. I direct the state of Rhode Island and all governmental bodies please to the Hearing Loss Association of America HLAA . Org for the factual data that will tell you our numbers and the significance. I don't say that to diminish my fellow citizens with mobility, blindness or other handicaps or discriminate by those I did not name. Your causes are genuine, heart felt and legitimate. I cannot speak for yours I can only speak for mine. People like myself are an enormous body, enormous, the baby boomers we are the single biggest demographic in the country and as we age, although mine is disease-related, hearing loss is an age-related issue. If you are not affected by it now trust me you will be. Unequivocally you will all have hearing loss, most of you in this audience probably have some already. Many of you probably deny it. That's reality and you would be in great company if you said that description I just gave. That's the dynamic of hearing loss. People will buy glasses and insurance will help you pay for glasses. People will not get hearing aids and insurance will give you squat, zero for hearing aids. That's why people suffer and endure hearing loss and the impact on their life and the financials.

Their contribution to society is working individuals and to the tax base on which Rhode Island state government relies, income creates taxes which enables programs. If people have to opt out of the workforce Employment because they cannot work due to disability, their income does not contribute to the bottom line, if I read my articles correctly it is pretty sorry for the state of Rhode Island in particular. What people with hearing loss need and I know that's really what you want to hear from me. What we need are several things. First of all, we need an appropriate acoustical environment. Large rooms and in particular, my city hall in Newport is a nightmare on Elm Street. If I could cook up the worst acoustical

hearing environment I would put that as a top example. It does not solve the problems to have a microphone. If I were an engineer I would tell you about signal to noise ratio. It determines whether or not amplification will help. Those of us with cochlear implants and hearing aid, simply louder, artificially elevated volume with a microphone will deliver louder garbage.

It is speech comprehension that the hearing impaired need. Not volume, speech comprehension is a different dynamic. That's delivered as an alternate captioning which is why, for the next meeting I attend at city hall in Newport. I will be requiring that the city government provide captioning. It costs them. I'm a taxpayer who pays real estate taxes. Americans with Disabilities Act gives me that opportunity and they need to because I cannot effectively participate in government if I cannot hear. I can't in that forum. Captioning is one avenue. Captioning costs money. Obviously, someone at a governmental agency is paying for Kathleen to be here and if it were working I would be grateful. Because it is a smaller room I'm able to deal. I'm one person with a disability. I cannot function in a city hall and some solutions to that are all-governmental buildings be looped that is. I can give you resources separate from my talk here about looping. It can be done after a building is built. What is does is enables anyone with a cochlear implant or a hearing aid, what is called a T-coil, it is a specific setting, if you get a hearing aid you need to demand your audiologist ensure that is there. They are unfortunately, an ignorant base. Nevertheless if you have a T-coil setting common an hearing aid. That's what enables you to talk better on a phone. Goes to a -- with a looping device that you hang around your neck. It would enable you to pick up signal. It is something that you wear and the signal is transmitted to the hearing device. That signal to noise ratio proximity is like this, verses like this. That's what that dynamic is about. Assistive devices such as I was offered here do not help everyone. They are super and great and wonderful. But they won't capture all of that hearing loss audience. Again this is the last thing that I want to say today. Remember that there's a piece, a big, big, piece of the hearing impaired audience that will not self identify. And it is dealing with hearing loss unaided and unimproved. They will not benefit from looping but for captioning it. They do not realize that it exists. We are not an informed public because we are a very -- we are below the radar. And we don't help ourselves because we don't step forward and say "I have a hearing loss" because we have ego issues around that. It is just how it is folks.

So you need to publicize when you have captioning and you need to define what that means in translating that to a benefit. Because you cannot assume that someone with a hearing issue will read captioning and say, good I can go to a city hall meeting that I could not before. You need to say literally, captioning. That means that everything that is said in the meeting speakers and audience will be typed on a large readable screen because there's a lot of vision and hearing loss that go hand and hand and this will enable you to participate in ways you may not have ever thought you could. Please come back and join us and please come back out into the public again and be the participatory person that you are able to be with our assistance. That's the deal. And seriously, go to HLAA if you have hearing loss or family with it, please join. They are doing a crack job in DC for advocacy. I'm not paid by them, I'm simply a person who joined them and I'm proud to say that within the past two years, they've really ramped up their visibility and advocacy role and they are a good organization. We need them, no one else speaks for us in DC. Thank you (applause).

I just want to thank one of the co-sponsors of this forum today is Looking Upwards and Karen Brown who is hiding in the back for setting up the room and getting here early enough and Kari Merandi who is responsible for securing the room. I came over the bridge to come. They live around the corner, essentially, thank you both.

Page 69:

NEIL: I'm going to be very careful here. I am a participant from England. I'm living in Newport -- I used to live here 20 years ago. Neil is my name. I used to teach here. I think -- -- I'm an access communication -- I advise architects and surveyors on how to build. I've also been involved in sailing. I just want to make a comment or two listening to you. About what is going on in terms of the equality in the state of Rhode Island. I know from my own experience and running my own business to improve accessibility and equality of opportunity for 20 years now. When I left here 20 years ago, you were years ahead of us in improving the lot of people with disabilities. Employment Now, I find myself, extremely concerned that you actually seem to be forgetting that disabled people are a major resource of your population. You have talent -- also, if you start to cut those people out of being a creative part of our society, it will cost you more in the long run. You will get more illness, you will get more people losing the will to be part of the society. There's also a multiplier factor, in the fact that every disabled person has friends and relations who may not be disabled but they identify with people who do. I'm not saying that England at the moment is doing very well either. We are cutting lots of our benefits and programs as well. People are fighting tooth and nail in my country to point out that this is economically unsound. The savings are not real. If you start cutting those programs it will cost your state more in the long run. You actually sort out good value. It does not mean that you just hand out money. You need to focus on what is a value. Both to a country as a whole and to the people.

I certainly .I would be quite happy to talk to your board about my experience I've had a lot of experience of different ways of improving both employment, activities, by disabled people. One of my main lines of work is showing businesses that actually they can make more money if they get their access and attitude for employing disabled people than if they don't. I won't mention. A major hotel chain, spent nearly two years, about \$50 million including accessibility in their hotels. I was speaking to one of their top people last year and it was paid all back in the extra money that they brought in from renting out rooms because they are known of being a fully accessible hotel chain. Not just the size of the rooms, the attitude of the staff. Induction loops, every single counter at the hotels has an induction loop. That's across the whole

country. It pays. It is an investment that really pays. I would hope that this is an example to your Commission. The argument that can be put forward is that it is not doing it because it is the right thing. There's actually a bottom line benefit to do this. I can show you actually how I used to be an accountant before I took up this line of work. It pays off quite quickly. Surprisingly quickly. Best of luck to you all. (Applause).

Page 87, Kingston Forum:

TANJA BLIKER-UKRAN: My name is Tanja Bliker-Ukran. The co-coordinator and employment specialist for the Cross Disability Coalition. I'm testifying on behalf of the Cross-Disability Coalition an initiative of the Rhode Island Developmental Disabilities Council.

There are four issues that we have identified. My colleague, Christina Baptista will talk about the other two issues at the August 4th public forum. There are two issues very important to individuals with disabilities that I want to comment on today.

We need more places to live that are safe and affordable. The next issue that is important to people with disabilities is employment. [Employment] Many people with disabilities want to work and cannot find jobs. We want to find good jobs that offer good wages and opportunities for career advancement. We need to have access to information about resources that are available on employment and in formats that are understandable including graphics.

We want to make enough money to pay our bills and not live in poverty. Our members have expressed the need for more public education of employers about available accommodations and to address stigma issues and employers' fears. Most people do not understand that people with disabilities are the same as everyone else, but there is a fear of the unknown. Since most people do not come in contact with individuals with disabilities. There is a severe lack of knowledge on the part of public and private employers about accommodations for work.

People think that it will be very costly to do this and it typically is not that costly. People with disabilities want more opportunities to own their own small businesses. Many times people make assumptions that individuals with disabilities cannot own their own businesses, but we can and we do.

We need more training about business development and available resources in Rhode Island for individuals with disabilities, thank you. (Applause).

School Related Testimony

Page 34, Warwick Forum:

JIM CRAIG: I just wanted to say that the panel who is going back to the Governor the legislature, recently in Warwick they've raised the car taxes. A lot of people complained about that. I was not happy about it. I'm fortunate enough to have a nice car. My wife has a nice car. I have a motorcycle. It hurt us in the way that maybe we don't go to dinner as much. I want to see them go to the wealthy, and when they go to the wealthy what is a tax increase going to mean to you? What are you going to lose out on? What will you miss out on if we increase your taxes by 1%? [Employment] After they get that answer, come and see my son, who is learning disabled, who wants nothing more than to work a full-time job, he has a high school diploma, I'm taking him to tutoring tomorrow night, he's 23. He has a diploma from the Warwick public schools, he cannot read or write and he does not know his alphabet. Ask him what the cuts will mean to him. What he has to do to deal with less. And it is significant. I help him as much as I can. He does not want my help. He wants to work full time, but he cannot get a job. He works a couple of days a week washing dishes with assistance but there's not enough there for him. I would like to know what the wealthy people are going to lose out by paying an extra 1%. And then ask my son what he's going to have to do without when they cut his services. Thank you. (Applause).

LORNA RICCI: Anyone else?

HEIDI SHOWSTEAD: May I speak again. This is Heidi Showstead. a couple of things I wanted to say with what that gentleman just said. One of my biggest passions is disabled youth. I'm right now 33 years old. We need to consider the young adults and youth in this society. We need to get away from seeing the disabilities in people. And what people can't do. And think about abilities. And how do we maximize those abilities? We maximize those abilities by saying to the people, instead of the people that speak for them. What do you want? What do you want to achieve? What is the maximum way you can achieve it and how can we help you? [Employment] It starts in the school department, you assume that people are contributing citizens to society, you educate them to be as such until they prove that they need their education watered down, don't water it down. Give them the diplomas that they earn, if they don't earn the diplomas let the school system work for a program that can teach them a trade or communication or whatever it is that they need. We need to look at the school departments and make sure that it is fitting the educational needs for each person and maximizing their ability. We also need to think about stipends. Some cannot work full time because they are afraid of losing their benefits or subsidized housing. When I say stipends like \$20 per speech. That's a way where your not taking a lot from the government but you are having pocket money. You are having pride in who you are. We used to have a lot of stipend programs in Rhode Island, we need to bring them back. I agree with what everybody else is saying and what President Obama has said about leveling the budget and taking the money away from the wealthy first before we take away payments and things that people need to live day to day. (Applause).

Subminimum Wage Related Testimony:

Page 106 Providence Forum:

JOHN PIMENTAL: My name is John Pimental and among other things, I represent National Federation of the Blind. Full disclosure first, I would like to say in the midst of all of these complaints; I would like to say I'm a disability success story. Employment Thanks to a lot of the people and a lot of the agencies that are here, I'm gainfully employed and have been for three and a half years now. That's thanks to SPVI and ORS and GCD. I've kind of been through the gamut and I'm very fortunate to be one of those barely 30% of disabled people who are employed. Having said that and having expressed my gratitude, I would like to say two things.

The other topic I would like to bring up is one I haven't heard, I don't know if it's perfectly appropriate, but on the Rhode Island State vice president for the National Federation For The Blind and on behalf of the NFB, I would like to bring up a topic that is critical, and that affects the disabled community and that most people don't seem to be aware of.

Employment At the end of the August break, United States Senate is going to vote to reauthorize the Workforce Reinvestment Act. Which by the way was originally passed in 1938. One of the parts of that act title five, section 511, authorizes the payment of subminimum wage to any disabled person. In 1938, that may have made sense, not been right, but it may have seemed to have made sense, but think of how other groups were treated in 1938. Think how some of our ethnic groups were treated in 1938. How were some of our religious groups treated in 1938. Would we consider paying subminimum wages based on their ethnic group? Would we consider paying subminimum wages to women because of their gender?

DARLENE HARTMAYER: They did it and still do.

JOHN PIMENTAL: It's not legal. It's not legal. The Workforce Reinvestment Act, if passed as it stands, will authorize subminimum wages for disabled people. This is a travesty. You don't teach people the value of disabled peeped by telling them they're 3/5 of the worth of a normal person. By way of that committee, health, education labor and pension committee of the U.S. senate one of the people who will be voting on that legislation is our own Senator Sheldon Whitehouse. We have contacted his office and it's his intent to vote for the passage of that act with the current language. That is, he supports a subminimum wage for disabled people. So I would urge that all of us contact both our assembly our most important the senate office of Sheldon Whitehouse and let him know how we feel about subminimum wage. We are not 3/5 of a person or a quarter of a person. We're expected to meet the same standards as anyone else and we should be paid the same wage as anyone else and that's how you teach people about the value the intrinsic value of disabled people. Thank you.

Supportive Employment Related Testimony

Pages 5 - 6 Barrington Forum:

BETSY ROCKEFELLER: My name is Betsy Rockefeller. I work filing papers and I work in different parts of the center.

Employment I work hard. I do a lot of filing, I go into the drawers to do that. And that's the work that I do there. We may need some new file cabinets because it's a little sticky, but we had a lot of boxes and we needed to move things around. So that was part of my job as well. And we set up new file cabinets and things are moving along well. And I do that in the winter the filing. And now that it's the summer, I like to go out a lot, and take trips, and on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I do my filing work.

JILL MERLIN: Hello, everyone, I'm Jill, Merlin, M-E-R-L-I-N, I have a dog. She is a Yorkshire Terrier.

I work at Employment CVS in Barrington, I worked at CVS in Barrington for five years. There was a staff member by the name of Greg, he used to coach me at work, and Lisa and Rob and I and Marco and Donald, we used to work in the recycling program. Mary Wombach set up the recycling program and I was able to work and earn some money and then I didn't make anymore money and the recycling program was shut down. I miss it. I have my own apartment. And my own bills that I pay. My parents taught me, I'm grateful for them for teaching me those life skills and I'm happy when I can work and earn some money. My father died, which is sad and my mother has been helping me out and she's been telling me about all the funding cuts in Rhode Island.

MARY WAMBACH: Remember, today we're talking about the budget cuts in Rhode Island that's what we're here to talk about today. Human Services The funding cuts. And how that affects the members of Corliss. We're not talking about your personal things, we're talking about the State funding cuts. And Corliss and the members and staff, that's what we're here about today.

JILL MERLIN: I was trying to explain that. My mom told me about the funding cuts in Rhode Island. And we're not going to have enough money to pay our bills.

MARY WAMBACH: Right, we're here to talk about the funding cuts. If there's less money for Corliss, there's less funds to help you.

JILL MERLIN: I've been a member of Corliss for a long time and it's important to have staff. I'm sorry that funding is being cut. I'm going to miss staff if they leave. Thank you. I really try to be independent and pay my bills and do everything myself.

MARY WAMBACH: You said you hope your dog Muffin feels better.

JILL MERLIN: I hope that Muffin feels better because Muffin is sick, I've had to clean up after her she's not feeling well.

MARY WAMBACH: We're not talking about Muffin anymore we're talking about the budget cuts in the state. Thank you, Jill.

JILL MERLIN: Thank you very much, have a nice day.

Page 11

MARY WAMBACH: I will summarize my comments because I understand other people want to speak and have to leave. My comments are from my home address because I've not had time to go through all of this with my board. I'm very familiar and very involved in almost all of the agencies and groups that involve people with disabilities at State and local levels. Many of the people involved in these groups do so much work for very little recognition.

Employment For employment services, ORS is doing a good job, but they can't do it alone. We need Rhode Island economic development and Rhode Island Division of Labor and Training in the workforce board to get involved. We need corporations and employers and businesses and Rhode Island, itself, to start hiring people with disabilities. If this state won't do it, why should the private employers do it? And this state is not doing it. Rhode Island is as a state needs to promote the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, there are tax incentives. People with disabilities, as a group who want jobs, are going to be good employees. We're not going to mess up. Many of us, when we get that job, we're going to stay there as long as we can work. You need to consider us as assets, not as liabilities. Developmental disability services, uhm, we've spoken just recently about funding changes and system changes. In my view, they're going to make it impossible for consumers to have choices about programs, about daily activities. These changes will make employment and supported employment almost impossible because the staff to consumer ratio will make it impossible for the DSP, direct service providers, to function as job coaches, whether formally through ORS funding or informally. It's a huge change. It's a violation of human rights and ethics. In the past, the DD programs were able to give a lot of attention to individual choice and need. Under the new funding regulations, and staffing ratios, we will not be able to pay nearly as much attention to individual aid. Adults who have mood, behavioral, medical communication needs, there's going to be very little time between staff to do a 15-minute head count to really pay attention to the consumers that most need support in order to be active in society. BHDDH (sounds like) and EOHHS, have said services won't change. Services are going to change a lot.

Page 13

LEAH: Hi, my name is Leah and I do a lot of things. Like theatre, going to college, sometimes I do a lot of things, too like hang with friends. Sometimes I go to parties. I work.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Leah, how are you able to do these things, do you have help?

LEAH: Transportation Oh, yeah, I also have, what is it called? Ride.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: And you have people from Looking Upwards to help you.

LEAH: Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: And they helped you to learn how to work at CVS

LEAH: Employment. Yeah, at CVS and stuff.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Do you work there alone and independently?

LEAH: Yes, I do.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: How long have you worked at CVS?

LEAH: A few years.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: A few years. And so now, you do it all on your own and you earn your own money.

LEAH: Yes, I do.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Pretty cool, huh?

LEAH: Yeah.

Page 27 Warwick Forum:

ELAINA GOLDSTEIN: I usually am sitting on the panel, but I did not want to sit this time because I wanted to be able to speak. This was a very rough year in the legislature. There was a lot of things that happened. You are all here because of the rough year in the legislature.

At times like this we have to look at some of the positive things that happened and I want to talk to you about the

changes that have been made to something called the Sherlock Plan. Employment The Sherlock Plan is the eligibility category in Medicaid that if you are working you can be making more money. You don't have to go into poverty. You can save money into a retirement account. This year, after it took us about six or seven years to get these changes in, the premiums have been reduced. There's not going to be an unearned premium. The maximum is \$100 a month. The really wonderful thing that happened with the help of the Commission on Disabilities and the advisory board called Rhodes to Independence there's a definition to employment supports and services. It was not in the law before. This definition includes, customized employment, benefits counseling, it includes transportation. So the bottom line is what we have to do now, now, that we've passed the legislation is that by the end of September, the Medicaid agency needs to have regulations in place. These regulations are very important. In order to make sure that the intent of the legislation is actually fulfilled, there has to be regulations in place.

It is very important to make sure that everybody who wants to make sure that this program works for you is involved in helping craft those regulations. We are going to have a meeting on, I think it is going on -- August the 3rd, if anybody wants to come in and work with us to give the recommended regulation language to the Department, we would be happy to have you come in.

The one wonderful thing that happened. For those of you who know, Secretary of Health and Human Services is Stephen Constantino. Prior to that he was chair of the Finance Committee in the House. A while ago he was not a great supporter of the Sherlock Plan, but this Friday he was a speaker at an ADA function.

It was tremendous how much he is very much in favor of this eligibility category and he mentioned that the Employment employment supports are much more than just personal care services. So I really think that he is at a place where he's very much going to be supportive and it is really up to the community and for us to look at the legislation, look at the services that you need because this new definition of employment supports includes some of the services that have been cut other places.

It is important to have the good definition, a good assessment tool to determine how much services you need so that you are able to get the services to get you to and from and the services to be at work. As well as the services to help you get a job or get a better job or get promoted in your job. I just really wanted to have this opportunity to talk to you about it. There's a lot of people in this room. When this transcript comes out, it is going to hear maybe four or five people that have spoken, there must be, what would you say, between 75-100 people in here? There's a lot of people in this room. It is really important. I can't overemphasize how important that the legislative agenda for the Governor's Commission on Disabilities is based on really solely on the information and feedback that people that come to these meetings give to the Commission. So far we've heard a couple of things, but it is really important and if you are nervous to get up and talk, you can just look at the panel, you don't have to look at the rest of the crowd if it makes you nervous. Come up, you guys made it here today. Come up and really express your concerns and if you have suggestions for the Commission on what they can do, come up and tell everybody.

Page 46 Cumberland Forum:

SANDY LABOTTA: I guess my concern is more adult reason related. I have a son that we adopted 35 years ago.

Because of his disabilities, and his disabilities are more, uhm -- like mental disabilities where he sometimes will get paranoid about you know, people saying things about him, doing things. Employment When he was in the workforce, he was constantly losing his job because he would either have outbursts at work that were like to the point where someone would say, you know, you need to leave, because you're working with the public here and he would just be like flipping out. He's never really in my estimation been diagnosed properly. Human Services He last has a lot of paranoia, he has a lot of, uhm, autism-type, things on the autism spectrum which to me has never been addressed with any of the doctors he's seen. If you were to meet him, he would probably appear to be a "normal kind of kid" he's one of those kids that for his whole life has fallen through the system.

Page 113 Written, Faxed, and Emailed Testimony

July 21, 2011 2:52 PM

Donna Breen
Portsmouth, RI 02871

Governor's Commission on Disabilities
John O. Pastore Center
41 Cherry Dale Court
Cranston, RI 02920-3049

Dear Committee Members of the Governor's Commission on Disabilities of RI,

In honor of the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, **I am writing to request no more budget cuts, and serious consideration to restore the funding to Development Disability Programs.**

There has been consistent cuts to the programs that provide and support vocational help and Housing residential assisted living 10 people with developmental disabilities since 2009. It is time to stop cutting the budgets 10 these programs. I work for an agency that supports 700 people and their families with disabilities. I have been employed by this agency for over 10 years. The people, who are supported by these programs, are productive members of the community because of these programs. The people with developmental disabilities, live, work, go to school, and volunteer at many other non-profit facilities. Their quality of life is dependent on these services. Their families are able to work and be productive members of the work force because they have supports for their loved ones.

Without Employment DO Program supportive services, the guardian family members will become unemployed, as they will not be able 10 provide day care for their loved and work as well. Many people with DD who have out lived their parents/guardians will end up in institutions or homeless. These DO programs provide employment for thousands of people throughout RI.

Employees of these programs get little or no health benefits, no retirement pensions, and no a cost of living increases since 2006. Please stop more budget cuts. Please consider reinstating some of the funding that has been taken from these programs.

It is a civil right for those with disabilities who struggled to keep their jobs and remain productive in their community, to be able to continue to receive supportive services.

Thank you very much for your lime, diligent work, and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Page 118

Thomas Geremia 7/29/2011 9:41 AM

To Whom It Concerns,

Our son was diagnosed as learning disabled at the age of two years. He had a very difficult time socially and academically. We did not know what to do or who could help us at that time. He became involved in Special Olympics which led to his involvement with the Spurwink organization. The Spurwink organization has become an intricate part of our life. Employment They have helped Tom find work, three days a week part time, provided him with counseling and job coaching. The Spurwink workers give freely of themselves when working or on their own time with no compensation. These young adults, through the efforts of this type of organization gain a feeling of self worth. Tom looks forward to going to work and socializing with his peers. It has to be noted that these "kids" do not fit in with "normal" society especially on a social level. Through the participation of the workers of Spurwink and the families they are able lead productive life styles, pay taxes and vote. Tom would not miss an election; he believes it is his duty as a citizen. The thought of cutting these funds while paying part time legislators medical insurances and building parks for illegal aliens absolutely bewilders me. We, the taxpayers and voters of the State of RI respectfully request that and cuts be reconsidered.

Sincerely

Concerns	Recommendations	Testimony on Pages
1. Infrastructure and resources regarding accessibility and information. Some individuals do not know what resources are available to them and what they need to ask for.	Continued education of public awareness of the rights and responsibilities of all individuals. Proactive education to access of resources.	46, 60
2. information about resources regarding business' (information and referral)	Information, referrals, and education to potential business owners with disabilities (possibly a one page informational piece to be distributed)	11,87
3. opinion piece/no action	No action	69,34,106, 6, 27,13, 46
4. budget cuts effects department of labor and training capacity	Continued advocacy regarding budget cuts and legislation and the services and departments they affect	11, 113, 118



voting check off graphic

MOTION: To recommend the above list of concerns and recommended solutions to the Legislation Committee LD/TT passed unanimously.

Meeting Adjourned @ 2:11pm