

2015 Public Forums on the Concerns of People with Disabilities and their Families

Governor's Commission on Disabilities, John O. Pastore Center, 41 Cherry Dale Court, Cranston, RI 02920
Gcd.disabilities@gcd.ri.gov 401-462-0100 (voice) via 711 (tty) 462-0106 (fax)

July 29, 2015 Middletown Public Library

MS. WARD: If you haven't signed in, could you just sign in, please, it helps us to keep track of who is here and if there's information we want to share, we'll have a record. I'm going to start, my name is Linda Ward. I'm a commissioner on the Governor's Commission of Disabilities. In my real life I'm the Executive Director of Opportunities Unlimited. I want to thank you for coming to the forum today. We will look at the speaker list and call you up in order. If you haven't signed up and you want to, feel free, we will stay here the whole two hours, even if we're done. Rest rooms are out here. I don't know that there's a public phone anywhere. But I'm sure most people have a cell phone. The purpose of these forums is to identify the concerns of people with disabilities and their families in order to assist the state to develop programs to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities to ensure everyone wants to speak gets a chance keep your comments short and to the point. If you have a problem that needs to be addressed the panel members will be here at the present end of the meeting to direct you to the proper agency. Again, we're not going to get into answering your specific question during the course of this. After the public forums are completed in early August, and there are -- one tomorrow?

MR. NUNNELLY: Two tomorrow. One Friday.

MS. WARD: Woonsocket, and then East Providence. So after they're completed in early August the sponsoring agencies will review the testimony and prepare recommendations which will be posted on the website by the end of November. Recommendations and transcripts will be printed and sent to state officials and members of the General Assembly. Used to develop policy for commissioners until the next year. If you need to register or change your address, feel free, we have it setup back there. Ask the panelists to introduce themselves.

MS. MCCABE: I'm Kath McCabe, senior counselor with the Office of Rehab Services, and I cover Bristol, Barrington, and Warren.

MR. ADAE: I'm Brian Adae. I'm a staff attorney with Rhode Island Disability Law Center. I'd like to thank everybody at opportunities unlimited for hosting this particular and reiterate that voter registration is available. We're delighted to see everybody here participating this public forum giving us input, and another way to do that is to ensure that your voice is heard.

MS. POLSELLI: I'm Colleen Polselli, Rhode Island Department of Health Office of Special Needs.

MS. MERRIMAN: I'm Jodie Merriman.

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MS. WARD: We also have assistive listening devices available in the back if anybody needs one, and we'll try to keep it to ten minutes each speaking, which isn't usually a big problem. And that's it. So, Annette, you're the first one up to speak.

MS. MS. BOURBONNIERE: I usually like to follow a bunch of people.

MS. WARD: Actually, you're the third person, and the first one.

MS. BOURBONNIERE: I --

MS. WARD: Can I interrupt you? Could you identify yourself by name?

MS. BOURBONNIERE: My name's Annette Bourbonniere, and I have a -- I can spell that for you, B-O-U-R-B-O-N-N-I-E-R-E. One of the questions that I have, and this would be for Mr. Adae, is there any movement to changing the whole voter ID law? I have seen a lot of people actually not vote because of it, and I, presently, went and did a protest vote, you know, going without it. And they don't count your vote for days, the election's over and all decided before they ever look at your vote.

MR. ADAE: Part of it, again, we're here to listen, and that's our primary role. But, informally, I'm generally aware. We do have, at the disability law center, as a resource, we do have PNA protective and advocacy for voting rights. That's part of why we have a piece out there. Kate Boden in my office is the primary contract. I don't really know, I think the best thing to do is continue to make your voice heard. I do know that there had been some conversations with the new secretary of state with Nellie Gorbea, and she had indicated her desire to reverse some of what had been done as far as voter ID, to facilitate people being able to vote and not put up as many road blocks, as it seemed like that occurred. Again, I don't know that much about it, but I would encourage everybody, in addition to making your voice here heard about that issue and specific instances you may have heard about, and perhaps you have written about, I love reading your column is to continue to voice those concerns so that they are heard. Hopefully, it will be the political will to have some movement. Not that I have a bias one way or the another. .

MS. BOURBONNIERE: Of course not. The other issue I would like to see addressed, the department of transportation listening to people with disability when they put in things like crosswalks in dangerous locations. In particular, we've had an issue where they put a new one in across the memorial boulevard across from Nikolas Pizza, and the sidewalk across is not useable by anybody with a wheelchair. So the problems with this crosswalk -- it's a problem for anybody, I believe it's dangerous because you can't see the crosswalk when you're coming up the hill, they claim you can, but you really can't. The second problem is if you put someone in a wheelchair, which is already low profile, if you're already having

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trouble seeing if someone was there. Low profile, it's like skeet shooting, but the problem then gets compounded because there is no useable sidewalk on that side of Memorial Boulevard. Before they put the crosswalk in, I talked with them about not doing it for that reason, that there was no sidewalk, and their response was that they would widen the sidewalk. Unfortunately all they did is create a bump out where it's easy access onto a sidewalk. So a person in a wheelchair not only is a high risk crossing, but then once there, has to either go back across the street because can't go anywhere on the sidewalk, or has to roll in the street. They claim that they measured it and got a particular measurement, but what they did was measure from curb to wall, and didn't take into consideration the great big parking meters that are in between, and I mean, that's a big obstruction. So, I mean that really needs to be addressed and they should really listen to people with disabilities before doing such things. It's a big concern I have because we've already had pedestrian deaths here.

MS. WARD: We could bring that back to Chris in the office. I can't ever remember Chris' last name.

MR. ADAE: I was wondering if it was a state road, town or city road.

MS. BOURBONNIERE: That was DOT, that was state.

MR. ADAE: Whether they had input in that.

MS. WARD: They should. So that's why we'll bring it back to Chris Degrave.

MS. BOURBONNIERE: It is a state road, and we talked with them before they did it and they decided they were doing it anyway and made it clear they had no intention of correcting it.

MR. ADAE: Thank you.

MS. BOURBONNIERE: Somebody else can have a turn now.

MS. WARD: Okay. Well, I have Paul -- I'm going to mutilate this -- Delpape.

MR. DELPAPE: Thank you. Pleasure to be here. Couple things I'd like to talk about and one of them the lady to my left just spoke about the voting. I had a little incident of voting for our town budget, and I do live in Tiverton, Rhode Island. I had called town hall to ask if they were going to have a new mark voting machine there for me to vote on. They said we don't usually have that on elections such as, you know, budget voting and stuff like that. So that kind of upset me a little bit and I called the board of canvas arrests and I spoke to a gentleman and told him what I just said, and he said there's no reason they cannot have a machine over there. All they have to do is call and ask for it and I said how much and he said it was free. I called back town hall and told them what was said to me, and they said they were going to

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look into it, and I got a call back about 20 minutes later and said we will have the machine here for us. So my point is, I don't care what kind of election it is they have these machines. Let's not hamper us, let us be part of the system and let us vote. I don't care what kind of election it is. The machine is there for us to use, we should have every right in the world to use it. No questions. So, anyway. I don't know each time I go vote whether it be a simple election or a national election, but I'm going to have to call Tiverton Town Hall to find out if they're going to have a machine there for me. Granted, there aren't that many blind people in the town of Tiverton, but there are some. Whether it's used or not, it should be there. And another point I'd like to bring out about the machine is this machine is not just open for handicap people. Anybody can utilize this machine. You say, well, everybody can see what I'm voting for. Well, not true. You have a headset, put it on; you can block the screen so nobody sees anything except you just hearing what's being read on the ballot. The other issues I've been fighting for 15 years and still fight being it, and nothing seems to happen. The RIDE program. As small as this state is, everybody in the state should have the right to have a means of public transportation. Tiverton, many years ago did have the RIDE program, but, of course, bottom line is, State of Rhode Island doesn't have any money to support it. But yet we do have bus service, and I believe it is four or six busses a day either three in the morning -- I know some in the morning and some in the afternoon. But yet, we can't have a RIDE van because when I called, I was told that it was an express bus, so therefore the RIDE van can't go there. Well, I disagree. If a bus goes to Tiverton, the RIDE van should go there, too. I don't care what kind of a bus service it is. Express, local, snail, we should have the right. We're not asking for a lot. Whether you be blind, cripple, wheelchair bound we just want transportation so we can get from point A to point B, and I don't think that's a lot. And that's the two things that really disturb me a lot. And I'm here because EP is having what I believe, either on Friday -- that's out of my way. I came to the closest one. Thank you very much.

MS. WARD: My understanding the machines are supposed to be available at all election sites. We'll follow-up on that.

MRS. BRIANOTTI: If we don't call, we don't know it's there.

MS. WARD: We'll definitely follow-up with that.

MR. ADAE: In addition to that, Mrs. Brianotti. I want to give you some contact information from my office.

MS. WARD: It only took the second speaker to get to transportation, so I appreciate that. Usually the first thing on the list, so... And then we have Susan Mello.

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MS. MELLO: My name's Susan Mello. I'm a deaf rights advocate for the State of Rhode Island. I don't have cards or anything, but I do help other people that have hearing impairments. And my question was years ago, any child that was deaf or hard of hearing used to be able to go to the state, Rhode Island School for the Deaf for free. And my son is deaf, and I have been fighting the last six years to try to get him to go to Rhode Island School for the Deaf. So, I'm wondering what has changed, and why it's not open to kids that are not within the district.

Education

MS. MERRIMAN: I can probably help you about that after.

MR. ADAE: May I join in?

MS. MERRIMAN: Sure.

MS. WARD: Doesn't look like anybody else has signed up to speak except the gentleman who just came in do you want to speak at all?

MR. PIMENTAL: I'm sorry?

MS. WARD: Do you want to speak? I don't know if you have.

MR. PIMENTAL: I would like very much to speak. Unfortunately, it's going to be a topic that you've heard before.

MS. WARD: That's okay. We don't care.

MR. PIMENTAL: My name is John Pimental. Full disclosure I'm the state vice president for the national federation of the blind, and no surprise what I'd like to talk about is transportation. And I have two or three different topics, but they're all inter-related, pretty intensely. The first, I'll start by tagging onto what my friend Paul Delpape just said. There are certain areas of the state which are inaccessible by disabled paratransit. A great example is Tiverton. I actually have clients from Tiverton. I run the diabetes program for INSIGHT, and it's the only program in the state that works with specifically, with blind and visually impaired diabetics. Those of you who aren't familiar with diabetes may not be aware of how challenging it is to manage diabetes and all the things you need to do to manage it, seem to require vision, or at least seem to require vision. So that's a really important and valuable service to offer. And yet there are places in this state that are inaccessible that I have clients that can't come to INSIGHT for free by the way, for counseling and training because they have no way to get there. Tiverton is one of those places. On a larger sense, travel within the state, as Paul said, I hate to repeat him, but again, travel within the state, it's a small state. There's no reason why every area of this state should be, should not be accessible. As the GCD knows, and this is my topic

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number two, I'll do it as quickly as I can so I don't seem like I'm belaboring a point, but the GCD last week had a big event to celebrate 25 years of the American's with disabilities ability. They invited all the community organizations that work with disabled people to come to the event so we could give literature and have a table to interact with all the people. And celebrate how much we've accomplished with the ADA that event was held at Fort Adams in Newport. Which we discovered was inaccessible to the RIDE program. There is no disabled para transit. So the disabled people who were supposed to be served by the event were excluded from it. I think that speaks volumes to how much awareness there is and sensitivity there is to the disabled population in the state. I think that needs to be addressed. There is no reason why that event couldn't have been held at a venue that was accessible. It's simply that no one thought of it. Disabled people are not top of awareness in our state. My third topic again which is inter related is I think there should be a real emphasis by the GCD and all other organizations in the state to prevent and minimize fare increases to the RIPTA program. It's very clear from the notes coming out of the ATAP meeting that they're planning on fare increases and they say are directly going to impact elderly and disabled people. They're seeking to do away with the \$25 unlimited bus pass. Which many elderly and some disabled people use. They're talking about cutting bus routes. It's very clear that fare increases are in the works. I understand budgeting I work in business for 25 years. I understand you need to meet budgets. But you can't balance your budgets on the portion of your population that is the most underserved and the neediest. In the blind, I speak for the blind population in particular, because in the blind population, I know for a fact, I'll give you a statistic there's 70 percent unemployment. Not only in this state, but everywhere. So the raise fares that affect these people directly, I believe are unconscionable. I see it coming and I feel it's coming through a slight of hand back door -- I'll go on record as saying it's going to happen, it's going to happen in the near future. I think this is very important, if fares are raised for a bus service, automatically, that means that there is double that amount of increase for anyone who uses the RIDE program or disabled para transit. If a bus ticket costs a dollar now, it's \$2 on a RIDE van. If you raise the bus ticket price to \$1.50, you've added money to every single trip every person takes. I think this needs to be addressed to prevent that from happening and I think it's one topic that affects everyone in this room and we should be very aware of, once it happens, I'm sure we're going to be told it's too late, already gone through, and the decision's already been made.

MS. WARD: Go back to Paul.

MR. DELPAPE: I would like to take you back in history for a minute if I could. Back when the ADA first started and was brought into play, granted, they have done a lot. But I want to talk about the RIDE program. Way back then, the RIDE program, to a degree was very independent. There were outfits such as Cozy out of Pawtucket, there was Rhode Island ambulance, there was Maher out of Newport, who is still

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active to a degree, I guess, with the RIDE program and maybe one or two others. It was great. The negative I have to say about it is since RIPTA took it over, it's been a disaster. I think RIPTA bit off more than it could crew and they should have never got involved, never. Because they're just pushing us, all handicaps, not just blind, under the bus. Thank you.

MS. WARD: Let me just respond to where that event was held last week. I sort of was a late comer to it all. Didn't know sort of the logistics to it. The purpose was to also celebrate that historic building made accessible. We dropped the ball on not making sure you could get there. But I think that, it's not an excuse, we spend a lot of money making buildings and places accessible, but you can't get there to enjoy you cannot access it. But it's a lesson learned for us. It goes back to; if you can't get there it doesn't matter if you can get in. We really need to keep pushing on the transportation issues. And I do apologize this happened. Shouldn't of. If we do an event again, it will be something we pay close attention to.

MS. BOURBONNIERE: I was not involved in the organization of it, and you're not very often going to hear me say something very positive about Newport, I'm pretty discouraged about Newport. There was an option that all of us have, and that is, the old port marine and Jamestown Ferry, both of them provide service from Perrotti Park, which is on the bus line. If you can get to the gateway center, there was transportation via water and the old port launch was made accessible, I'm going to say five years, maybe a little bit longer ago, and let's see, I guess five, just about four or five years, and Jamestown just this past year. So, I'm sorry you didn't have that information, because that was something that we all, you know, had access to. Actually, would improve, adds to the atmosphere of the whole event by being able to go by water. Again, that was not publicized very well, it's too bad.

MR. PIMENTAL: To my knowledge, it was not publicized at all. Certainly the information that I received telling me about the event made no mention whatsoever of how to get there. So, I mean who would anyone who is not from Newport know that that was available?

MS. BOURBONNIERE: You're right. I've tried to let people know that it existed, but can't really advertise for people.

MS. WARD: When we sponsor something, we'll just have to do a better job. When we don't it's a lesson learned. It won't correct it, we'll move forward. Make sure everything we problem. Try to do things at time, 4-6 is much better than 6-8, we've discovered. There are mistakes made, but we will make sure it doesn't happen again.

MALE SPEAKER: To that point, if I may. And this is, go back in time to meetings I've attended in the past, find my comment I've repeatedly asked why we can't have more of these meetings from 6-8. There's an automatic assumption on the part of many people that disabled people don't work.

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For those of us who work, means I have to take time off work, which I had to today, and take a reduction in pay or use vacation time in order to attend. If there were a single meeting offered. If the meeting was at Peacedale, I'd be more than happy to take a bus. I think it would just show greater sensitivity that there are disabled folks who are working for whom it's a real challenge to be able to take time off during their workday to come to these meetings.

MS. WARD: We did 6-8 here last year, had a terrible turnout. I don't know if we have a 6-8s this time.

MS. GLEASON: We tried it the past couple of years, and no one.

MS. WARD: I think maybe five people or something. I think it's a point well taken and maybe we can look at the Providence one as being a little later. We did it at the library.

MS. GLEASON: It was the south Providence Public Library.

MS. WARD: Kind of the center of the state. Think about doing one there. That's all who have signed up. Does anybody else have anything they'd like to say? I have a maybe from Diana. Have you gone from maybe to yes or no?

DIANA: I don't know. One of my beefs is people parking in handicap spots that don't have stickers on their car, and rarely do I see the police doing anything about it, specific lie, Accessibility Shaw's and stop & shop's lots here in Middletown. Since the dollar tree opened up where the Home Depot center is, there's no curb cut from the parking lot to get in there. A lot of older people shop there because nothing in the store is over a dollar. Smaller items, so you don't have to buy so much of it. A lot of older people are single and it's a popular place. There's one at Aldi's and not one until you get to the left end, I guess, by the new pizza place.

MS.WARD: This is in?

DIANA: Home Depot Middletown, off of this road.

MS. WARD: I'm not from here, so just trying to figure out if it's a state road.

DIANA: No. No. It's private. And the stores are together, and every now and then there will be a curb cut there, but specifically a store that is shopped so much. They're open until 11:00 at night. People going in there, a lot of people going in to get, the kids do to get snacks before the 9:00 movies. Probably that time on Fridays and Saturdays. I'm thinking of older and handicap people like myself that get out of the car and look and how am I going to get my foot up over that curb?

MS. WARD: Thank you. Could you identify yourself?

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MS. SCHULTZ: Jackie Schultz. My attention was really just to hear what's going on. I had attended a meeting in Chicago recently about elections, and one thing that was very disturbing to me was that the GAO did a study in the 2000 elections on access to polling sites where only 16 percent in the entire nation were considered fully accessible and when they did the other study again in 2008 that only 27 percent were fully accessible. And we've been doing something called NCOA, national change of address where we're trying to get people's accurate addresses from the United States postal service, and something hit me and broke my heart a woman sent her form back saying that she had macular degeneration and she's unable to vote and that's so not true. And what I wanted to do is come here and listen to the kinds of issues in our community so we can address some of them and I encourage each and every one of you talk to your local canvassing office to express your needs. Use your voices as you are doing right here because the more we hear the more things will change. As far as the voting is concerned, please, please let us know, talk to us, tell us what the issues are with voter identification, those votes are counted that night or that morning and that's usually a provisional ballot. I stay up to do this. The voter's identification for our purposes very helpful to make sure people get the right ballot. Our town alone was four different ones and verifying identification and addresses helps us to make sure you're voting for the right district or the right representatives to help you.

Accessibility

MR. PIMENTAL: May I make a comment for president lady who just spoke? You're not going to believe this but as a Portsmouth resident, I'd like to comment on the accessibility in Portsmouth.

MS. SCHULTZ: It's awful, that's why I'm here.

MR. PIMENTAL: I have had excellent results. Good experiences and I vote every election and I've had excellent experiences in Portsmouth, I have to say. In fact, at one of the polls, I walked in, and the person taking the registrations told me sign here, and actually put a signature guide on the line for me without being asked. Which just impressed me. You would be amazed how the little teeny things can be impressive. The other thing I'd like to say -- the other thing I'd like to say, as INSIGHT as part of their community groups, we run community groups in nine different areas of the state, where ever you live in the state, even in Westerly or wherever, the far stretches, we hold a community group on a monthly basis. Somewhere in the year, we will have an automark machine and give people a chance to learn how to use it and actually get their hands on it and practice with it.

MS. WARD: Paul.

MR. DELPAPE: I'd just like to flip back to the RIDE program again. The other thing I feel very strongly about, as small as this state it, and John mentioned it, there's no reason why every corner

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in this state should have transportation because you can take other states bigger than ours, which we could probably fit this state this state in there once or twice. They have much better transportation as far as the RIDE programs concerned. I feel very strongly, and it's only going to get worse. I feel the three quarter mile barrier needs to go away.

MS. WARD: I'm not supposed to express my opinion, but I so agree on that three quarter mile thing.

MR. PIMENTAL: There are areas in Warwick from which blind and visually people can't get to. INSIGHT located in Warwick. This is a big city, for Rhode Island. And yet, there are areas that are inaccessible and clients that can't come to us, and I think that's a huge, a huge issue. MS. WARD: I agree. Anybody else have anything that they want to say or anybody else wants to speak? Okay.

MR. DELPAPE: If time allows, I'll throw in one more comment, if I may, regarding transportation. I'm sorry. The other thing that doesn't often get mentioned, every single year or two, RIPTA talks about cutting underserved bus routes, eliminating this or that bus route. Of

Transportation

 course their reason is to save money for bus routes that are under used. I think it's important to know that every time they cut a bus route they save five or six times as much money not from eliminating that bus, but because every time they eliminate a bus route that three quarter mile kicks in and eliminate all the para transit service to that area. It's kind of a back doorway to save money on the backs of disabled folks.

MS. WARD: Well it's been an issue that's been on the for front of the GCD and if there's any ability -- I think the biggest voice is the voice of those who rely on it. I know they've been doing public meetings at some of the senior centers and there's been a big out cry from the seniors about it, I think that's what we continue to do. Wait one minute, Paul.

PAUL: Another thing, I'll be called a rat, but I spoke to Bob Cooper about a month or two ago, he's on the Governor's Commission, one of the head ones down there, he did tell me about a Bill 5144 that was supposed to be in the budget. I don't know if it ever got there or not. It was supposed to involve transportation about the RIDE program. I don't know if it ever made it or not.

MS. WARD: I don't know.

MS. GLEASON: I'm not sure, Bob's actually out this week but I can talk to him Monday and try to find that out.

PAUL: Thank you.

MS. GLEASON: You're welcome.

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MS. WARD: We just had somebody walk in who wants to speak.

CAROL: For privacy reasons just like to use a name like Carol. If you need to know my name, you might recognize me from the ten years that we've been together.

MS. WARD: I was hoping I was going to see you, I was a little worried when you weren't here.

CAROL: Well you should be worried. You should be. Okay. So, per HUD published document quote, "The movement of secondhand smoke between units can't be controlled in multi-family buildings. Ventilation and other air-filtration technologies can't eliminate the risks caused by secondhand smoke exposure." The document continued that the elderly and disabled are especially vulnerable due to chronic health conditions and inability to physically escape second-hand smoke.

Independent Living

Smoke free policies provide housing stability for residents with respiratory conditions such as asthma or COPD. Adults who breathe in second-hand smoke experience immediate adverse effects on their cardiovascular systems, which can trigger heart attacks. Other contaminants, including deodorants and household sprays can't be used. They are inadequate for disabled persons with respiratory impairment. They have, as we've discussed, before this forum and all the affiliated organizations including the disability law center for ten years, asking for relief from this situation that has caused cardiac complications, interference as reported to Brian directly and other members affiliated with this, other things that no disabled person struggling for their health should have to be regularly exposed to. Port ability is an absolute essential requirement as based on the level of knowledge of the providers. Inadequate knowledge of the providers. A person, disabled -- a disabled person with respiratory and cardiac impairments can't possibly, reasonably be expected to go through a waiting list process. I had project-based housing operations, including 811 and 202, and the only ones that we apparently provide any kind of knowledge of disability law to. A member of this forum who has been here in the past who is not here today, ten years ago addressed this when he was affiliated with the independent living center. And his only recommendation was to get on the wait list because of the structure of the units there is an anticipation that there may be protection from second-hand smoke and other respiratory and cardiac irritants. After ten years on the wait list, I was offered a unit, which has third-hand smoke and history of smoke in it, recent construction, only one bedroom one bedroom which does not satisfy my absolutely mandatory requirement for two bedrooms, and the other problem with it, of course, is that it's project based, 811 funded so it provides no port ability in there and you find the obvious respiratory impairment of the place, the larynx dysfunction and it goes to the lungs, that some people can't control through medications because of side effects and have a long, long time of experience with that. So where are we? We're still running around, being told there's nobody in the state who is responsibility it is to address this. Or, you can do a fair housing suit against a particular element. And they will investigate it. I'm

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sorry, that's not the policy procedures and accessibility actions that we need. It's not just a personal problem, it's a very serious personal problem that is literally killing me, but it's a global problem that affects every child with asthma, or who is potentially, a pregnant woman, with, you know, it's a great report. You should all get on-line and get it. It's debunked all the nonsense about oh it's too expensive, and smokers will be reluctant to it. It's very easy to read. It's got the facts, the figures, the data, but where is the accessible housing now today while people get around to learning what we've known? How many years have we known that something is a carcinogen? Smokers have a 20 percent more chance of getting sick even though they're nonsmokers. That's it. I don't have the voice to speak anymore to people that continue to refuse to hear and take appropriate action for this disability. It's just as important as mobility, hearing, and vision. Respiratory impairment -- well, to quote the American Lung Association: "If you can't breathe, nothing else matters." Thank you.

DIANE: Could you clarify what she is saying, specifically, is this housing, under HUD?

MS. WARD: Well, I don't like to speak for somebody else, but basically there are issues around smoke and other chemicals because we have that occur in apartments. If you feel up to it?

CAROL: The EPA refers to them as contaminants. The CBC, I'm sorry. They're issues that affect everyone's health. Some people are privileged enough not to have lost their life savings even though they had a lucrative career and be in their own private home and manage their own detached living space. This report specifically addresses what they're calling now affordable, or HUD affiliated, financed, their use of the word multi-family, but they're saying it applies to multi-unit. People that have fragrances on. Despite the fact you ask every year. It's a barrier to a disabled person with respiratory disabilities. Particularly if they cannot manage it. This is specifically for the, you know, people that need HUD assistance because they've been reduced to nothing because of the fact that inadequate options have caused the decline of their health so that they cannot get restored enough to go out and restart their career or find some other adequate alternative. It's people improvised by the need for their housing that they'll get sicker in, because of other people -- The only "reasonable accommodation" that has been suggested is to get an exception to the payment -- which do not even come close to paying for a detached home in an area that the outdoor air quality could be adequate enough to maintain some semblance of health. And seriously who is going to pay \$2,000 for a home when the payment standard doesn't let you go a fraction of that? But that is the only solution that has been offered. And, just get on the phone, even though you're too improvised to have long distance or cable TV or the other things people take for granted you're supposed to get on the phone and find every housing authority and ask if they have any nonsmoking any respiratory impairment disabled accessible units available. Well, first thing they're going to do is say yeah, right, I'm going to deal with this problem? Then you're supposed to call

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property management companies and ask for which of their tax credit units might still be within payment standards so that you can port your section 8 voucher to them. So far, none of them have come up with that, if they're even nonsmoking or transitioning from non-smoking and there are multiple years, ten year's wait. First you have to go through the qualification, do you qualify in the housing payment for that particular city or jurisdiction of the housing authority. Then you have to get them to work with you to give you the payment standards and utilities. Then you have to call around to every private person you can find and every housing complex and you already know the probably very unrealistic there's going to be anything, but who has, somebody who has severe respiratory and cardiac complications, they have the stamina to do that? No, they don't, and no one in this state has been able to come up with a disability -- anybody for ten years. It's even worse now because the payment standards are so inadequate for addressing these disability needs. So, I don't know if I answered your question. Or if anybody has any more questions? It's something that everybody needs to pay attention to for their own health. But, it's particularly necessary when, when your health is so impaired that you can't possibly do the only things that people are saying have to be done. It's an impossible task.

MS. WARD: Thank you. Anybody else want to speak? And if not, we will be in recess in case anybody else comes in here to speak. Okay. We'll be here. If anybody changes their mind. We'll be here from now until six. Thank you. (RECESS)