

October 30, 2019

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**

Protest the AAB at the Governor's Office

Update!

Join us at 3pm this Friday, November 1st, in front of the governor's office on the 3rd floor of the state house to hold the governor accountable and demand he follow the law with regards to the Architectural Access Board.

Last Friday, October 25, approximately 40 disability advocates visited the governor's office to talk about the Architectural Access Board (AAB). The main issues are the independence of the AAB, and how the replacement executive director (for Tom Hopkins who recently passed away) should be selected. The governor did not show up.

The Boston Globe reported on the event: [Governor's office gives the runaround to people who can't run.](#)

Existing state law details that the AAB shall hire their own executive director and that the director reports to the AAB. Instead, the Baker administration moved the AAB from the Department of Public Safety to the Department of Professional Licensure (DPL). DPL has insisted that they will choose the next AAB Executive Director. Subsequently, 2 out of 5 members of the hiring board could be AAB board members, but the hiring process remains unclear. DPL has written a new job description which describes the new ED reporting to DPL and not to the AAB members.

Disability advocates have been unsuccessful in having a conversation about these AAB changes with the governor.

Accessibility remains one of the biggest barriers to full inclusion for people with disabilities. Tom Hopkins was a great advocate for accessibility and we need his replacement to be both an expert in architecture *and* an advocate for accessibility. The Architectural Access Board must be willing and able to do their job of ensuring all new and renovated buildings comply with state accessibility laws and regulations!

Please Contact:

- **Governor Baker** at (617) 725-4005
- **Administration and Finance** at (617) 727-2040, contactanf@state.ma.us

and let them know that the AAB must remain independent. To achieve this independence, the AAB must select their own executive director who

reports directly to the AAB. *Nothing about us without us!*

The activists from last week are with Disability Policy Consortium, Disability Law Center, United Spinal Association and Independent Living Centers from across Massachusetts.

Scroll down to see other AAB Regulations issues.

Sincerely,
Paul Spooner, Executive Director

H. 2029/S. 1441 - An Act Relative to the Architectural Access Board

The MA regulations do not address employee areas and some housing issues which are addressed by the ADA. Instead of builders following the ADA in these specific areas, MA builders stick with the MA regulations - which is no regulations. H.2029 and S. 1441 would fill in these gaps, and make MA regulations comply with the federal regulations.

We have been trying to pass this bill for over 10 years, and recently discovered that significant money has been spent trying to prevent this from passing. We would argue that had the money been spent on actual access improvements... these spenders would have more money in their pockets!

Please contact your state Senator and Representative and describe your support of these very important bills.

Proposed Updates to Current AAB Regulations

Excerpt from the DPC Newsletter (10/15/2019) - slightly reworded:
"One of the key functions of the Architectural Access Board is to develop new regulations and update old ones, in order to keep up with the changing nature of technology and construction methods, and to ensure the needs of all people with disabilities are met. In March of 2015, Governor Baker issued an executive order calling for regulations to be updated across state agencies. The AAB complied, working with experts to craft new regulations, and holding listening sessions across the state to get feedback from the public on the greatest areas of need. These regulations were submitted to the governor's Executive Office of Administration and Finance in mid-2016. Since then, nothing has happened. In the three and a half years since, the updated regulations have never been implemented, with little explanation as to why. "

While this new version does not include the provisions in H. 2029 and S. 1441 - An Act Relative to the Architectural Access Board, it is an improvement to the current regulations and would bring MA building requirements closer to the ADA. These new regulations were carefully crafted to improve access for people with disabilities, and should be implemented.

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1. Ask What is planned for the updated AAB regulations?
2. Add your opinion on supporting the implementation of the new regulations.

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Staff December 2018

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