

**MetroWest  
Center For  
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities  
Living in the Community**

## **Happy New Year**

2020 promises to be an intense year with an impeachment trial, elections, issues needing advocacy, and the 30th Anniversary of the Signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Governor Baker just got the party started with his slashing of the Alternative Housing Voucher Program in his 2021 Budget. As you know, this has a long way to go through the legislature before it is final.

We recently had our annual Legislative Forum with MetroWest legislators. In addition to their being very supportive of our issues, several had their own disability issues to tell us about! MetroWest has the best delegation in the state.

Paul Spooner,  
Executive Director

---

### ***In This Issue***

#### **Articles:**

- [Alternative Housing Voucher Program](#)
- [Holiday Open House](#)
- [Presidential Primaries](#)
- [Crip Camp](#)
- [Legislative Forum](#)
- [Chris Walsh Center](#)
- [IL Education Day](#)
- [Pharmacy Tech Training](#)
- [National Park Lodges for Wheelers and Slow Walkers](#)
- [Off The Path National Parks](#)
- [Blind student says Curry College failed to accommodate disability](#)
- [A Portrait of the Region](#)
- [2020 Census](#)
- [AAB Bill](#)

## Information for Activists:

- [National Contact Info](#)
- [State Contact Info](#)
- [National Resources](#)
- [REV UP Massachusetts](#)
- [Disability Pride Toolkit](#)

## [MA Tales of Independence](#)

---

### ***Alternative Housing Voucher Program***

*Recap from the DPC's editorial from January 27, 2020*

After 6 years of fighting, last year's AHVP funding was \$8 million for approximately 750 vouchers. Unfortunately, Governor Baker's new budget would slash this line item down to \$5.105 million, losing approximately 250 vouchers.

*by Colin Killik of DPC:*

"This cut is tremendously harmful and totally out of line with the realities of our state and the experiences of our community. No one seriously disputes that Massachusetts has a severe shortage of affordable housing at present, and people with disabilities are hit harder by this issue than any other community—we are more than twice as likely to be homeless as people without disabilities. Our state's small inexpensive housing stock is overwhelmingly physically inaccessible, and the boom in new luxury units is producing housing that is out of reach financially for nearly everyone in our community.

In times like these, with tens of thousands of people with disabilities on waiting lists for housing, we need more investment in AHVP, not less—we need to increase the number of vouchers, and raise the payment standard to make them more usable throughout our state. "

---

### ***Holiday Open House***

Thanks to everyone who attended our 2019 Holiday Open House. We had a great time! Enjoy more photos on our website at [mwcil.org](http://mwcil.org)!



Christina and Pat



Elizabeth and Kyla





Eddie



Adrienne and Representative Jack Lewis





Elizabeth, David, Christine and Danya

---

## ***Presidential Primaries***

### **Key Dates:**

- **Registration Deadline** and change party affiliation before MA Presidential Primary - Wednesday, February 12, 2020
  - To vote a specific party - you must be unenrolled or enrolled in that party by February 12.
- **Early Voting:** February 24 - February 28  
(<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/>)
- **MA Presidential Primary - Tuesday, March 3, 2020**

***Please contact us if you have questions about getting registered or voting!***

REV UP MA has a page with various links to candidate positions on disability issues. [revupma.org/wp/2020-disability-issues/](http://revupma.org/wp/2020-disability-issues/).

REV UP Texas has compiled a bigger list of links to candidate positions! Download their [candidate\\_positions.doc](#).

Election Central has compiled a list of all of the primaries and caucuses across the nation at <https://www.uspresidentialelectionnews.com/2020-presidential-primary-schedule-calendar/>.

---

## ***Crip Camp***

Crip Camp is a new documentary for Netflix produced by the Obama's production company, Higher Ground. The movie is featured at Sundance 2020.

Camp Jened ("run by hippies") was a camp for teens with disabilities in the Catskills in the 60's and 70's.

"*Crip Camp* focuses on a group of teens who went to the camp in the early 1970s (it closed due to financial difficulties in 1977) and later joined the radical disability rights movement, with many of them ending up in Berkeley as young adults, advocating for legislation that would require public places to be accessible to everyone, and that would prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. The film shows how the vision the young people experienced at camp, for a world that was open to everyone, led them to become activists and community organizers." (from vox.com)

Read more about the movie at [www.vox.com](http://www.vox.com). Or read more at [apnews.com](http://apnews.com).

---

### ***Annual Legislative Forum with Easter Seals of MA***

The following legislators attended: Rep. Jack Lewis, Rep. Carolyn Dykema, Rep. Carmine Gentile, Rep. Dave Linsky, Senator Becca Rausch and Rep. Kate Hogan.

As usual, all of our MetroWest legislators were very receptive to all of our issues and concerns, and spoke of additional disability issues that they are working on.

Paul Spooner spoke about MWCIL priorities which included an increase in IL Funding (4120-0200), an increase in Independent Living Assistance (TAP, DME Reuse and AT) (4120-4000), an increase in the Alternative Voucher Program, alignment of AAB laws with the ADA and passing an act prohibiting discrimination against adults with disabilities in Family and Juvenile Court proceedings.

Karen Langley of REquipment DME Reuse Program asked for continued funding. The governor's budget has dropped the funding for this important program. Karen brought impressive numbers for the legislators detailing the number of people helped by REquipment in their districts.

Joe Bellil and Catherine Fradenburg from Easter Seals of MA spoke about Assistive Technology and the innovative loan programs they have developed. Eleanor spoke of how much AT from Easter Seals has improved her life as her eyesight has deteriorated.

Visit [mwcil.org](http://mwcil.org) for all of the photos from the Forum.





Reps Kate Hogan and Carolyn Dykema and Ed Carr  
of MWRTA



Rep. Jack Lewis and Senator Becca Rausch



Catherine of Easter Seals and Eleanor



Karen Langley of REquipment

---

### ***Chris Walsh Center***

Framingham State has announced the opening of the Chris Walsh Center. (Representative Walsh was a strong supporter of MetroWest Center for Independent Living).

"The Chris Walsh Center for Educators and Families of MetroWest will be tasked with collaborating with school districts and state education officials to offer support and programming for educators, families, administrators and advocates in the MetroWest area, as well as conduct scholarly research, educator preparation, and professional development where appropriate. The space will also study and promote



Chris Walsh



best practices about the continuum of educational supports available to students with disabilities, students who are gifted, and students with unmet needs, according to the university."

Read more in the [metrowestdailynews.com](https://www.metrowestdailynews.com).

---

## ***Independent Living Education Day at the State House***

Independent Living Staff, Consumers and Advocates will meet on March 12, 2020 at 10 AM to educate legislators about Independent Living priorities. The gathering will take place at the Grand Staircase.



MWCIL Staff and Consumers



speaking to legislators

---

## ***Free Pharmacy Technician Training for Young Adults with Disabilities***

MRC and CVS are offering an 8-week training opportunity for young adults with disabilities to be held at the MassHire Career Center in Leominster beginning March 17.

Participants learn soft skills, customer service, and technical skills to successfully work at CVS, leading to a rewarding career pathway as a Pharmacy Technician.

Thanks to a grant from the Commonwealth Corporation, this training is free for young adults (age 18-35) with any type of self-disclosed diagnosed disability. It's not for everyone, this isn't an easy job, but there are hundreds of openings and CVS has committed to interviewing all graduates of the program for positions anywhere in MA.

This proven program was designed by MRC in partnership with CVS Health, and is being offered by the Polus Center in partnership with the North Central MassHire Workforce Board, CVS Health and MRC. (Participants do not have to be enrolled with MRC to attend.) For those of you with employment goals, we would like to partner with you and assist you in achieving those goals. You may take full credit for any referrals who gain employment as a result of this program.

### Information Sessions:

Information sessions will be held at the North Central MassHire Career Center, 100 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA.

Feb.13, 2:00-3:00 or Feb 25, 10:00-11:00

To register for one of the information sessions or for more info, please contact via phone, text, or e-mail: [jduval@poluscenter.org](mailto:jduval@poluscenter.org), 978-273-1898.

Download the [Pharmacy Tech.pdf](#).

---

## ***Barrier-Free Travel; National Park Lodges for Wheelers and Slow Walkers***

New access guide highlights wheelchair accessible national park lodges.

If an accessible national park road trip is on your bucket list, then make sure and pick up a copy of Candy B. Harrington's newest title, **Barrier-Free Travel; National Park Lodges for Wheelers and Slow Walkers**. Not only does this helpful resource include access details on 52 national park lodges in the mainland US, but it also offers essential access

information on the other facilities and attractions in the featured parks.

Harrington's newest release is chocked full of well-researched access information including:

- Insider Tips for visiting each national park
- Access details on national park trails and attractions
- Detailed access descriptions - including bed heights - of lodge rooms
- Photos of the accessible rooms, including the bathrooms
- Accessible train, trolley, boat and bus tours in the national parks
- National Park lodging concessionaire information
- The best national park scenic drives and windshield views
- Fees, roadway information and seasonal closures in the national parks

Additionally, since different people have different access needs, Harrington goes well beyond just saying that a room is wheelchair-accessible. "Most travelers don't understand access regulations - they only know what works for them," says Harrington. "That's why I included essential details such as bed heights and the location of the toilet grab bars in the book," she adds.

**Barrier-Free Travel; National Park Lodges for Wheelers and Slow Walkers** also features information on off-the-beaten-path accessible finds. Says Harrington, "After numerous research trips to the parks, I decided to add a Don't Miss This section to the book, because a lot of folks assume that only the top attractions are wheelchair-accessible. For example, many wheelchair-users never make it out of Yosemite Valley, while Tioga Road, Mariposa Grove and even Hetch Hetchy also offer some nice accessible trails and attractions. I like to give people a lot of options."

This inclusive title is the most recent addition to Harrington's national park series; and although it's written for wheelchair-users and slow walkers, stroller moms will also appreciate the access information in this guide. It will help everyone plan the ultimate national park trip.

Known as the go-to expert on accessible travel, Candy Harrington has covered this niche exclusively for 24 years. She's the founding editor of *Emerging Horizons* and the author of a library of accessible travel titles, including the classic, *Barrier-Free Travel: A Nuts and Bolts Guide for Wheelers and Slow Walkers*. She also blogs regularly about accessible travel issues at [www.BarrierFreeTravels.com](http://www.BarrierFreeTravels.com).

**Barrier-Free Travel; National Park Lodges for Wheelers and Slow Walkers** (\$16.95, ISBN: 978-0-9985103-6-1) is available at [www.BFNationalParkLodges.com](http://www.BFNationalParkLodges.com).

---

***Beyond The Typical: Off-the-Path Parks We Think You'll Love***

Here is another article on accessible parks from New Mobility's February 3



issue. Several people contributed :

<https://www.newmobility.com/2020/02/accessible-parks/>

Parks include:

- Forts in Savannah, GA
- Badlands, SD
- Hell's Half Acre Lava Field, ID
- Bryce Canyon, UT
- Valley Forge, PA

### ***Blind student says Curry College failed to accommodate disability***

From an article in the [Patriot Ledger](#):

"Isabella Scott filed a federal lawsuit against Curry College for alleged violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The four-count complaint alleges the college segregated Scott from her service dog, segregated her from her fellow classmates, allowed drivers without handicapped placards to park in designated spaces and failed to address numerous problems with physical access across the Milton campus."

While Curry claims that they are a "known leader in accessible and inclusive learning, Scott claims that that ADA support has been uneven, with some professors being very supportive and others dismissive.

---

### ***A Portrait of Our Region***

The Foundation for MetroWest and Middlesex Bank brought statistics and data together in an overview of the MetroWest region in [Impact MetroWest](#). [WGBH news](#) summarized the report.

A variety of indicators are reported showing changes over the last 10-12 years, as well as comparisons nationwide and statewide.

As summarized by WGBH, the news is mixed.

"Some of the data compiled in the report, called Impact MetroWest, paint an idyllic picture. There is a lot of protected land in MetroWest. There is a strong economy with low unemployment. There is a significant number of high-tech jobs, which help bring money to the region, and crime rates are decreasing.

However, the report also shows that many MetroWest residents face severe financial hardship. Homelessness has increased by 45 percent since 2007, with more than 6,200 homeless residents in MetroWest. Nine percent of individuals in MetroWest live below the Federal

Poverty Level. That includes the 8 percent of children who live in poverty, and is reflected in school test scores. The majority of the data used in the report were from the years ranging 2000 to 2018 and all were obtained from official sources, according to the Foundation."

Drilling down into the report on disabilities shows the following information:

The percentage of people with disabilities remained the same in the region, but went up by approximately 24000 people. We also would argue with their last sentence as to why this is important. "The proportion of people living with a disability is an indicator of how many may need assistance from social networks or the government to live independently or maintain economic stability. **It also indicates challenges a community may face to improve access to buildings, education, and employment opportunities for the disabled population.**" We would argue that accessibility must be implemented regardless of how many people are living in the area with disabilities!

Another statistic is that the percentage of people over 65 who live alone has decreased. It is unclear whether it's good or bad for someone to live alone - we would argue that as long as it's a choice, it's a good thing!

---

## ***Architectural Access Board Bill H.2029 / S.1441***

Please help us make 2020 the year that Massachusetts Architectural Access finally aligns with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This bill costs the state nothing, and will greatly improve housing and employment options for people with disabilities.

Download the [AAB/ADA.docx](#) document and share the information with your legislators! Help us dispel inaccuracies and promote all the benefits of this important legislation!

---

## ***2020 Census***

From Marlene Sallo, Executive Director of Disability Law Center

"On April 1, 2019 elected officials, nonprofit workers, and the public gathered at Nevins Hall in Framingham to kick off the state's 2020 census. This event marked the one-year countdown to the National Census Day (April 1, 2020).

The census is mandated by our Constitution and aims to include every person living in the United States. Census data provides the basis for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds every year to support states, counties and community programs, such as housing, education, transportation, employment, and health care.

During the #2020Census, households will be able to self-respond in three ways: Internet, Telephone or Paper Questionnaire. The Census Bureau has indicated that the online questionnaire and telephone contact centers will all be fully accessible to people with disabilities and that the paper questionnaire will be available to download in both braille and large print. Completing the #2020Census form ensures that neighborhood schools, health centers, and other vital parts of our communities are adequately funded.

Please make sure to participate in the upcoming census. Find out more at [www.censuscounts.org](http://www.censuscounts.org)."

Also visit the [Revupma.org](http://Revupma.org) page on the Census.

---

---

## Activist Resources and Directories

---

---

### *National Contact Information*

[Directory of House of Representatives](#)

[Directory of Senators](#)

#### **Senator Edward J. Markey**

Address:

255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Phone:

(202) 224-2742

Contact:

[www.markey.senate.gov/contact](http://www.markey.senate.gov/contact)

Website:

<http://www.markey.senate.gov/>

#### **Senator Elizabeth Warren**

Address:

317 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

Phone:

(202) 224-4543

Contact:

<https://www.warren.senate.gov/contact/shareyouropinion>

Website:

<http://www.warren.senate.gov/>

---



## ***State Government Contact Information***

[Directories of State Senators and Representatives](#)

[Contact Governor Baker](#)

[WhereDoIVoteMa.com](#) - Enter your address, and get a list of all of your elected officials.

---

### ***National Resources***

**Indivisible** - A practical guide for resisting the Trump agenda - Former congressional staffers reveal best practices for making Congress listen. [Download the pdf](#) or [Visit the website](#).

**Save My Care** - a movement to bring together families, advocates and health care providers to protect the health and financial security of all Americans. [Visit the website](#).

**National Council on Independent Living** has Action Alerts for issues on the table in Washington. [Visit the Advocacy Monitor webpage](#).

---

**Join REV UP** - Make the disability vote count!

For more information, visit [www.revupma.org](http://www.revupma.org).

And follow our [Face Book page](#)!

---



### ***Disability Pride Toolkit***

[NCIL](#) (National Council on Independent Living) has compiled a [Disability Pride Toolkit and Resource Guide](#).

This guide delves into what Disability Pride is, and why it is so important. The difference between the Medical Model and the Independent Living paradigm offer a framework of the disparities between how society works and how it should work.

The guide also offers many resources and ideas on how to advance the discussion and how to educate others. *We highly recommend this*

## ***MA Tales of Independence***

**Visit our video projects at:** [www.matalesofindependence.net](http://www.matalesofindependence.net).

The concept and history of Independent Living are complex. MA Tales of Independence is a collection of videos by people who are successfully living independently. Each person tells their story including things like: how they achieved independence, why independence is important to them and what barriers they had to overcome. Some of our videos have historical information about the struggle and others are about growing up today. Most have college degrees, jobs and families.



2018 Staff

### **MetroWest Center for Independent Living**

**Website:** [www.mwcil.org](http://www.mwcil.org)

**Email:** [info@mwcil.org](mailto:info@mwcil.org)

**Phone:** (508)875-7853

**Address:** 280 Irving Street, Framingham, MA 01702

**Facebook:** 

---

Sign up for our Newsletters and Action Alerts.

**Subscribe**

