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October 28, 2010

Issue: 3

# MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.

## Vote!

Dear Paul,

Why should you vote in the upcoming election?

Voting is a civil right all citizens enjoy in this country. Our democracy is based on the fundamental right of one person, one vote. But in these tough times, when people are angry and fed up with government, they may feel that their vote does not count or will not make any change occur.

***This year, more than in recent times, votes do count.*** In Massachusetts and the nation, candidates from across the spectrum of political views need your vote to win. Many states, including ours, face major ballot questions that will change our future. So you must make sure you go out and exercise your right to vote. Whatever your view is, to sit at home and not participate will mean you were not counted, you did not get involved and you cannot influence our future.

In the upcoming election, we face three very important ballot questions. All three questions, if passed, will have a profound impact on our lives, and even more so if you are an individual with a disability.

If question 1 passes, we will lose access to services to treat addiction. If question 2 passes, there will be much less accessible and affordable housing. And, if question 3 passes, we will see major cuts in social services, local aid, and cuts to education. We can not afford these cuts. We can not afford cuts to the sales tax right now. We can not lose housing incentives, when we still struggle to find available housing today.

As a Center for Independent Living, working hard to ensure your right to access services and to live in the community, we strongly urge you to vote no on all three ballot questions, in order to protect and maintain the services that people with disabilities need to live in the community.

A famous disability leader, Justin Dart, once said "Vote because your life depends on it", the best way to describe the situation we are in today here in Massachusetts. Vote "NO, NO, NO," on the ballot questions and help us move forward in these tough times to get and maintain the services we need to help individuals with disabilities live in freedom and choose the community where they want to live.



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### Benefits University

You are invited to attend the MetroWest SHINE Program's Annual Health Benefits University

A program designed for professionals working with seniors or people with disabilities about Medicare and the many health insurance options available to their clients. Beginning Jan 2011, there are MANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO MEDICARE PLANS in Massachusetts.

When:

Tuesday, November 16 (1 PM - 4:30 PM) **OR**

Monday, November 22 (1 PM - 4:30 PM)

Where: Whitney Place in Natick

## Remember to VOTE!

from Paul Spooner, Executive Director

### Ballot Questions Vote NO, NO and NO!

Question 1 would eliminate the sales tax on alcoholic beverages, costing the state \$110 million in tax revenue that's now dedicated to drug and alcohol treatment programs.



Question 2 would repeal Chapter 40B, which allows developers to circumvent exclusionary zoning laws to build affordable housing in communities where there is none or very few units available.



Question 3 would cut the state sales tax to 3%, costing the state \$2.5 billion in tax revenue which would mean even more huge state and local budget cuts.



We have many additional compelling reasons to vote NO, NO and NO - visit our [website](#) and read Issue 2 of our newsletter.

**Make your voice heard by voting.**

### Voter Tips

Election Day is Tuesday, November 2, 2010. The polls must be open from 7 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for state elections. Some municipalities may open earlier.

Bring personal identification to the polls. Acceptable identification must include your name and the address at which you are registered to vote, for example: a driver's license, photo identification, current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, a rent receipt on your landlord's printed letterhead, lease, duplicate copy of a voter registration affidavit, or other government document showing your name and address.

William Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, has information on where to vote, how to get an absentee ballot and who is on your ballot at the [state website](#). *Absentee ballots should be requested IMMEDIATELY.*

### Problems Voting? Have your rights been violated?

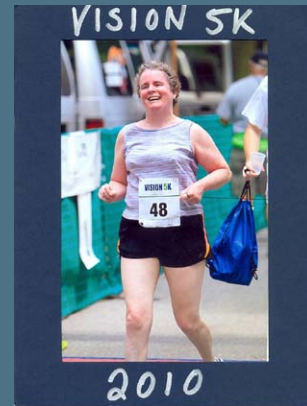
Call the Disability Law Center hotline on election day between 7 a.m. and 8 p.m.

- 800-872- 9992

Cost: \$15

To register: Call Denise Roskamp 508-532-5980 or [email](#) before November 5.

### Carroll Center's Vision 5K



Jini Fairley, Director of Services here at MWCIL, recently raised money and ran in the Carroll Center's Vision 5K Road Race!  
**Great Job!**

Attention Professionals  
Informational Breakfast Meeting  
Monday, Nov. 8th  
9:00 AM to 10:30 AM  
Callahan Center in Framingham.

MWCIL and the MetroWest SHINE program are sponsoring an informational breakfast meeting for professionals who assist people with disabilities.

Topics include

- Medicare changes for 2011
- MassHealth options
- Training opportunities for professionals
- Advocacy issues.

R.S.V.P. by October 27th to Kathy Worhach, MetroWest SHINE Outreach Associate  
[kworhach@needhamma.gov](mailto:kworhach@needhamma.gov).

DOJ Public Hearings on Technology Accessibility Rules  
The Department of Justice has scheduled three public hearings on four [Advance Notices of Proposed Rulemaking](#), which seek public comment on the possibility of

- TTY: 800-381-0577

Call the Secretary of State's Election Division. People will be answering the phone while the polls are open.

- 1-800-462-VOTE (8683).
- 617-727-2828

Report your problem to the national organization, [Justice for All](#)

- 866-687-8683
- [www.866OurVote.org](http://www.866OurVote.org)

## Disability Rights at the Polls

You have a right to vote if you are disabled!

William Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, has compiled a [Booklet of Voter Information](#) which includes the Voter's Bill of Rights (page 15), and Voting and Absentee Ballots (pages 10 - 11). You may have received a paper copy with a red cover at your home.



The [Disability of Law Center](#) of Boston (800-872-9992 or TTY: 800-381-0577) has also compiled information on voting rights specific to people with disabilities. Visit both the the FAQ page, and the Questions and Answers page.

Below is an overview of voting rights for people with disabilities. Please refer to the two links above for more complete information.

- All polling places are required by federal and state law to be accessible to voters with disabilities.
  - Accessible parking spaces
  - An accessible path of travel from the parking area to the polling place
  - An accessible entrance to the building, including ramps if necessary, and which is at least 32" wide
  - Requiring a voter with a disability to make advance arrangements to vote, vote at "curbside," or be carried up stairs are *not* acceptable methods for providing access to polling places.
  - If the accessible entrance is different from the main entrance, there must be proper signage directing voters to the accessible entrance.
  - The accessible entrance must be unlocked and independently usable by voters with disabilities during the same hours as the main entrance.
- There must be an accessible voting booth.
  - If you use a wheelchair, you should be able to fit your wheelchair (space under shelf at least 30" wide, no lower than 27" and no higher 32" ) underneath the voting table and reach the shelf to make your vote.
  - The specimen ballot must be posted no higher than 48" high to be visible by those in wheelchairs.

revising the ADA regulations to address accessible web information and services, movie captioning and video description, accessibility of Next Generation 9-1-1, and accessible equipment and furniture. The ANPRMs were published in the Federal Register on July 26, 2010, and the comment period for them closes on January 24, 2011.

- November 18, 2010 at Access Living in Chicago, IL
- December 16, 2010t the United States at the Access Board in Washington, DC
- January 2011 in San Francisco, CA - date and location tbd ([ada.gov](http://ada.gov) will post shortly)

## Markey Honored



On October 21, 2010, the Carroll Center for the Blind awarded the first ever Pathways to Independence Award to Congressman Ed Markey who spearheaded the passage of both the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act.

On the same day, students at the Framingham Learning Center for the Deaf applauded Congressman Markey for his hard work on this important act.

## Celebrate October's

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

- The Job Accommodation

- You may ask the election officials to use the AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal, which is an accessible ballot marking device, to mark your ballot.
  - As part of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA), there will be at least one AutoMARK Voter Assist Terminal at each polling location.
  - The AutoMARK allows a voter to mark their ballot privately and independently.
  - After inserting the ballot into the AutoMARK, the voter can review the ballot and make selections by using the touch screen and/or the keypad while listening to the ballot over a set of headphones.
  - After making all of the choices on the ballot, the AutoMARK will mark the ballot in accordance with the voter's choices by filling in the corresponding ovals or connecting the arrows on the ballot.
  - The ballot will then be returned to the voter for deposit into the ballot box.
- You have the right to request assistance when voting from anyone of your choice. If you do not bring someone with you, you have the right to have two (2) poll workers assist you.
- You have the right to receive up to two (2) replacement ballots if you make a mistake and spoil your ballot.
- You have the right to vote by absentee ballot if: you will be absent from your city or town on Election Day; or if you have a physical disability that prevents your voting at the polling place; or if you cannot vote at the polls due to religious belief.
- If you live in a facility, or are under guardianship, you still have the right to vote unless the guardianship specifically took away the right to vote.
- Identification may be required. If you feel that you have been singled out to show identification because you have a disability, you can make a complaint. Call the Disability Law Center or file a complaint with the elections commission.
- If your name is not on the voter's list, ask the election worker to double check by calling the city or town hall. If your registration cannot be verified, you may cast a ballot that is held aside and counted only if the election is very close. This is called an escrow ballot.
- Voting in Person: If you meet the qualifications to vote absentee, you may request to vote in person before election day at your city or town hall at a time arranged with the clerk. The application for your ballot must be made no later than noon on the day before the election.
- If you are permanently disabled and cannot vote at the polling place, you may file a letter from your physician with your city or town clerk, stating that you are permanently unable to cast your vote at the polling place because of disability. A completed application for an absentee ballot for you to sign and return will be mailed to you by the city or town clerk at least 28 days before every primary and election.

If you feel that your right to vote has been violated in any way, call the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Elections Division at 1-800-462-VOTE (8683). This call is free within Massachusetts.

Network has ongoing Webcasts for employers, employees and people with disabilities looking for work. Visit their [Training Hub](#), and navigate to your interest.

- The U.S. Dept. of Labor has launched a [Veterans Hiring Toolkit](#) for Employers.
- The [AAPD](#) sponsored their annual Mentoring Day this month. The program connects 20,000 students and job seekers with all types of disabilities to thousands of employers in more than 300 locations nationally. Even if you missed the opportunity this year, you should consider participating next year. It's a win-win event!
- Locally, get involved with [The Employment Now Coalition](#) - a group of advocates, unemployed people with disabilities, and agency personnel in the employment and rehabilitation business. ENC's purpose is to develop and implement a game plan to impact employment opportunities. Their next meeting is November 5, 2010 at the Morse Institute Library in Natick at 1 p.m. Contact [DeAnn Elliott](#) for more info.

## *About Us:*

**MWCIL website**  
(past issues are available at our website)

### **Email**

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## Election Protection

The *national* organization [Justice for All](#) has addressed the topic of difficulties in voting for people with disabilities. The Election Protection Coalition has hundreds of lawyers waiting for your call. Expect a call-back within 24 hours for calls before election day. In the past, poorly trained poll workers, inaccessible voting sites, malfunctioning or inaccessible voting machines, and a number of other factors have discouraged people with disabilities from voting.

- 866-687-8683
- [www.866OurVote.org](http://www.866OurVote.org)



## Social Security Admin. Sets COLA at Zero

The Social Security Administration, using the CPI, has determined that there is insufficient inflation for a cost-of-living increase. The [CBS Money Watch](#) website provides a



Roosevelt signs in 1935

balanced look at the issue. We've also linked to the "market basket of goods" that is used to calculate the [Consumer Price Index](#) - note that most numbers are based on spending \$100 in 1982-1984. Unfortunately, exactly what is used for "food" and other items is not detailed. Anyone who grocery shops KNOWS that inflation is here, now, in 2010. Does this chart reflect a change which grocery store the shopper visited?? Did the shoppers go on a diet and buy fewer items? Thank goodness the CPI includes tobacco (huh?) - which is one of the few items in their "basket" that reflects a price increase, and has kept COLA from going negative. What is going on?? Is it just me??

Telephone services remains flat - still at the 1997 rate - apparently Cell Phones and TV prices have not yet made it into the government defined "market basket of goods" which is characterized as a typical set of goods.

Obama and Pelosi recognize that the calculations are flawed, and have stated that they will try and supplement 2011 Social Security payments. Maybe a review of the CPI and its basket would also be helpful!

## CA Budget

With a \$19.3 BILLION dollar deficit to overcome, Governor Schwarzenegger of California made final budget cuts of \$300 million

to IHSS. In-home Supportive Services provides in-home personal care and domestic services to individuals who are blind, aged, or who have disabilities. These services include bowel and bladder care, bathing, grooming, paramedical services, housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, accompaniment to medical appointments, and protective supervision. IHSS is paid for through a mix of federal, state General Fund (GF) and county funds. Read the details at the [SCAN Foundation](#). This link was provided by the [Justice For All blog](#).

One of the cuts is the elimination of a \$133 million state mental health program. Gov. Schwarzenegger is now being sued for violation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Read this Silicon Valley [MercuryNews.com article](#).

MWCIL has provided this information because if Ballot Question 3 (Reducing Sales Tax from 6.25% to 3%) passes, Massachusetts will need to overcome a budget shortfall that is comparable to California's.

***VOTE NO on Questions 1, 2 and 3!***

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