



**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

People with Disabilities Living in the Community

November 6, 2014



We've been very busy at MWCIL. We attended the annual SILC conference in September. Next we held our annual Awards Gala in October. We were privileged to honor Chris Griffin, Executive Director of Disability Law Center, and State Representative Tom Sannicandro. Both have been very effective advocates for people with disabilities.

And then we had the election! The governor's race was a nail biter. As we keep preaching, every vote counts!

Sincerely,

Paul W. Spooner, Executive Director
MetroWest Center for Independent
Living

Awards Gala and Fundraiser

We had a lot of fun at our annual Awards Gala and Fundraiser. We honored two people who deserve recognition for their accomplishments for people with disabilities: Chris Griffin, Ed of

MWCIL / MASILC Holiday Party

When:

Friday, December 5
from 1-4 p.m.

Where:

MWCIL
280 Irving Street
Framingham

RSVP:

(508) 875-7853

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MWCIL



**MetroWest Center
for Independent
Living**

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Address: 280 Irving
Street

Disability Law Center, and State Representative Tom Sannicandro. Ed and Paul roasted Framingham's Dennis Giombetti - we appreciated his good humor! We also unveiled our new video about the MetroWest Center for Independent Living - we will be posting it to our website soon.

Visit our [website](#) for more party photos. *Thank you to everyone for coming, and donating to a worthy cause!*

Tom Sannicandro receives Legislator of the Year award from Paul Spooner:




Christine Griffin receives the Advocate of the Year award from Paul Spooner.



Paul Spooner and Ed Carr roast Dennis Giombetti.

Framingham, MA 02702

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Election News

Elected Officials

Governor's Race: Every single vote counted in the gubernatorial race, even with a relatively high turnout. With the governor-elect being a Republican instead of a Democrat, we can expect some changes of appointed positions such as secretaries and commissioners. For MWCIL, this means that we will forge new



relationships and educate new people as we continue to advocate for services for people with disabilities. The new governor will also have challenges as he learns to work with a mostly unchanged, Democratic House and Senate. Charlie Baker made many campaign promises, such as full implementation of Chapter 257, in support of needed programs. We will continue to be in the front lines making sure that the promises are kept. We will also continue to work with both the Executive and Legislative branches in crafting new programs and tweaking the existing programs.

Legislators: In MetroWest, most (all?) of our legislators were re-elected. We have been very proud of the support they have given to the Center, as well as statewide programs for people with disabilities. We have honored both Senator Karen Spilka and Representative Tom Sannicandro with Legislator of the Year awards, and were happy to see them both be easily re-elected.

We were pleased to see that Barbara L'Italien won a Senate seat. She has been a strong advocate for people with disabilities with her bill on insurance coverage for autism.

Ballot Questions

The ballot questions didn't directly affect disability issues, but they do affect everyone.

Question 1: The Gas Tax will not adjust annually with inflation and will stay at 24 cents per gallon. If the state needs more money for roads and bridges, legislators and the governor will have to work together to increase the tax.

Question 2: The 5 cent bottle deposit will not change - the deposit will continue be applied only to carbonated beverages. This result is widely attributed to heavy spending by the beverage and supermarket industries.

Question 3: The Casino bill is unchanged. The current plans are for a slots parlor in Plainville (June 2015), and full casinos in Springfield and Everett (2017).

Question 4: Companies with 11 or more employees will be responsible for paid sick time at a rate of 1 hour per 30 hours of work.

Advocacy Victory

Thanks to the Disability Policy Consortium for this story.

For several years the DPC, Massachusetts State Association of the Deaf (MSAD) and other advocates have been pushing for two big changes in public policy about educating children who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing.

First, Deaf teachers, who were required to demonstrate a proficiency in phonetics. If you have never heard sound this is an impossible task. As a result, many educators who were Deaf could not obtain licensure in Massachusetts. Several individuals we worked with were losing their jobs or being demoted.

We argued that this requirement was a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) .

Secondly, educators of the Deaf and school

ASL interpreters were not required to demonstrate a proficiency in American Sign Language.

This week we scored a double victory: no phonetics tests for Deaf teachers and staff who work with Deaf children must be fluent in ASL. Congratulations to all those who worked to bring about these changes.

Got News?

Send us your ideas!

This monthly section is for news and comments from our readers. You can suggest something for us to pursue, or give your opinion on a topic (relevant to people with disabilities of course), or let us know of what is working and what needs improvement in the community. Please email Sue at srorke@mw cil.org. Thanks!

www.mw cil.org

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