

**MetroWest  
Center For  
Independent Living**

# People with Disabilities Living in the Community

May 2016



Great work by everyone at IL Education Day! The House budget is complete, and negotiations for the Senate budget amendments are beginning. Please help us pass two amendments - one for affordable housing, and the other for MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (see below).

Sincerely,

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

P.S. We have posted more Marathon photos on our website at [www.mwcil.org](http://www.mwcil.org). Click on Photos, and select the 2016 Boston Marathon gallery.

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## MWCIL



**MetroWest Center for  
Independent Living**

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## Advocacy Needed: Two Senate Budget Amendments

MWCIL supports the Disability Policy Consortium's priorities, and asks voters to contact their Senator.

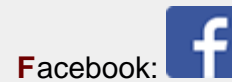
"The DPC continues to fight for adequate funding in both the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH).

The Senate Ways and Means Committee increased the funding for AHVP by \$1.6 million. Senator James Eldridge has filed Amendment #734, which would add an additional \$900,000 to bring the program back to where it was a decade ago.

The budget of MCDHH has been decimated over the past ten years. The Senate Ways and Means Committee increased MCDHH funding by \$450,000. Senator Kathleen O'Connor-Ives has filed amendment #462 to increase funding by \$2.5 million.

Please contact your senators today by email or phone to ask that they sign on or co-sponsor each of these amendments."

Senate contact information is listed at [malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov). Find out who your senator is at [wheredoivotema.com](http://wheredoivotema.com).



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## An Act Relative to the Architectural Access Board

After passing the Senate, unanimously, this bill is waiting for focus from the House. This bill does not require any additional state funding, and has huge implications for people with disabilities, as it brings MA buildings into compliance with the 2010 federal Standards for Accessible Design. If this bill passes, we could see more accessible housing, fewer barriers to employment, and improved accessibility to all public buildings.

Please contact your House representative, and

encourage him or her to support SB 1323.

If you have any questions, contact David Correia ,  
Advocacy Director at MWCIL.

[dcorreia@mwcil.org](mailto:dcorreia@mwcil.org).

Download the [fact sheet](#) for more information.

## Annual Accessible Recreation Fair by DCR

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is hosting the annual Accessible Recreation Fair.

**When:**

June 4th, from 10am-3pm

**Where:**

Artesani / Christian A. Herter Park (Brighton)  
1175 Soldiers Field Rd  
Boston, MA 02228

**To register:**

Laila at 413-545-5759 or

[laila.soleimani@state.ma.us](mailto:laila.soleimani@state.ma.us).

Registration is recommended, especially for use of equipment.

*Please RSVP to request an ASL interpreter.*

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) Universal Access Program (UAP) is offering a free, fun-filled day celebrating accessible outdoor recreation in Massachusetts State Parks!

Family-friendly, accessible, and inclusive activities include: cycling with an assortment of accessible cycles, hiking and letterboxing with all-terrain wheelchairs and walkers, face painting and kite decorating, golf and other equipment demonstrations, bubble blowing and games, music and dancing, and much more!

Come visit Rainbow the Clown for a balloon animal from 10am-11am! Light refreshments generously provided by Shaw's Supermarkets, Starbucks Coffee, and Whole Foods.

With over twenty organizations attending, this is the place to come find out about accessible, adaptive, and inclusive recreation programs

offered in the greater Boston area and beyond. Enjoy socializing on the banks of the Charles River while learning about inclusive, accessible programs and resources available to people of all abilities around the state and the region.

Join DCR rain or shine (call Gigi at 617-626-1294 for recorded status in case of severe weather).

For more information on DCR's Universal Access Program and a schedule of activities, call 413-545-5353 or visit [www.mass.gov/dcr/universal-access](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/universal-access).

Download the [DCR Summer/Fall Flyer](#).

## **Training - Housing Laws for People with Disabilities**

**When:**

Friday, June 10, 10 - 3

**Where**

Cambridge Public Library  
449 Broadway  
Cambridge

**R.S.V.P. (required) and accommodations request by June 3:**

mail@dlc-ma.org  
(617) 723-8455 X123

**More information:**

[www.cambridgema.gov](http://www.cambridgema.gov)  
Download the [flyer](#).

Attend a training on housing laws in Massachusetts and the rights of tenants with disabilities. A Community Feedback Forum will follow this training. DLC and the Cambridge DPC are looking for input on the issues you are facing as a person or family member of a person with a disability

Hosted by the Disability Law Center and the Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities.

Please refrain from using perfume or other scented products.

## **Low Vision and Blindness Technology Fair**

**When:**

Wednesday, June 1, 10 am - 2 pm

**Where:**

Easter Seals Technology Center  
NPC Building Community Room  
89 South Street  
Boston

**Cost:**

Free

**RSVP and request accommodations:**

Catherine Bly 617-226-2634 or  
[cbly@eastersealsma.org](mailto:cbly@eastersealsma.org)

MassMATCH Assistive Technology Regional Center (ATRC) Boston, managed by Easter Seals, provides device demonstrations of the latest equipment to the general public. People with disabilities, family members, educators, employers, therapists and others learn more about AT through these hands-on opportunities.

Vendors will be on hand to show their latest devices in the area of low vision and blindness.

## Independent Living Education Day at the State House 2016

Thank you to everyone who attended and participated in our 2016 event. We were especially impressed with the two youth leaders who spoke - Patricia and Dustin.



We also appreciated the updates from numerous legislators, including Senator Jamie Eldridge, Senator Michael Moore, Senator Barbara L'Italian, Senator Joan Lovely, Representative Paul Tucker and Representative Theodore Speliotis, all of them have been working hard to improve IL Services, and civil rights for people with disabilities.



Senator Jamie Eldridge



Senator Joan Lovely

The new MRC Commissioner, Nicky Osborne, spoke at her first IL Education Day.



MRC Commissioner, Nicky Osborne

Several important IL Advocates also spoke, including Mary Margaret Moore, Joe Bellil, Allegra Stout, Olivia Richards and John Chappell.

Finally, thanks to MWCIL Advocacy Director, David Correia for his Master of Ceremonies work!



David Correia

Visit the [MWCIL website](#) and click on PHOTOS for more pictures from the event.

For information on our IL Priorities, visit the [MASILC website](#). More work is needed to achieve these important goals.

## **ADAPT Protests in Washington, DC**

Adapt Activists in Washington were arrested on April 11 as they called for greater access to community based services.

They protested and lobbied at Health and Human Services, at the White House and at the House and Senate. Many protesters were arrested. From the [ADAPT facebook page](#): "Thousands are dying in Nursing homes. What is Secretary Burwell's solution? Instead of working with disability groups like ADAPT on regulation to promote community living she arrests the activists. GUILTY!"

The [Disability Scoop](#) reported on the ADAPT actions, or you can visit [ADAPT website](#) for more information.

## **"Religious Liberty" Is a Threat to Disability Rights**

by John Winske

I was at a Red Sox game a long time ago. A woman smiled and said, "If you prayed more you could walk." The statement was delivered

in such a matter of fact manner, it was as if she was telling me the time. Unfortunately, this would not be the last time someone tried to "heal me" and remove my need for a wheelchair.

Recently, I have thought about this event as I watched the spread of "religious liberty" proposals being presented in various state legislatures. While the current proposals have theoretically targeted individuals who are transgendered, they represent a profound threat to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and disability rights.

The "religious liberty" bills, that have passed or been proposed, have not required any proof of one's belief system. Only a statement that serving someone violates their private code of ethics. These laws allow the business owner or public official to override public accommodation laws. It is key to remember that public accommodation laws came about because of segregated businesses and public services. In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act.

When Congress passed the ADA in 1990, they relied on the concept of public accommodations as the entire basis of Title III, and for much of Title II, government services. If religious liberty is allowed to trump public accommodations then all of Title III of the ADA will not be worth the paper on which it is written. Prior to this wave of zealotry, the primary threat to the ADA appeared to be "libertarians", like Rand Paul, who protest telling businesses whom they must serve or allow into their shops.

This new wave is far more insidious and dangerous.

Remember, religious organizations are already exempt from the ADA. Under a [recent federal court ruling](#) religious schools are now exempt from the ADA and serving children with disabilities. But, the latest wave of laws is not about churches or religious groups. They are about private businesses and public services



How long will it be before someone claims they don't want to build a ramp, because they believe people with disabilities should walk? Or denying service to someone who has seizures because they are possessed by the devil? Or serving food to someone with AIDS because it could infect them?

Rest assured the ADA is about to be confronted with a major threat to its very existence. It is arriving in sheep's clothing. It is couched as a minor correction to a Supreme Court that overreached. It is a well cloaked, destructive force.

John Winske  
[jwinske@gmail.com](mailto:jwinske@gmail.com)

## Coming Out as a Cripple

Thank you to the Disability Policy Consortium for the link to this [blog by Nicola Griffith](#).

"Today I'm coming out as a cripple. I'm not talking about acknowledgement of physical impairment but about claiming identity as a cripple ... My impairment is not the problem. Cultural attitudes and built environments are the problem."

From dining out to participating in politics, the U.S. is not accessible. A few curb cuts are not enough. Read Nicola Griffith's article - it's spot on.

## VOTER Resources

The newest resource for voting and people with disabilities is REV UP, Massachusetts. REV UP is dedicated to getting all people with disabilities registered to vote, educated on the issues, and voting! Visit the website at [www.revupma.org](http://www.revupma.org).



The **state website** has tons of information: [Elections Division on the state website](#). With more information, on-line registration, insistence on accessible polling venues, early voting (new

for November 2016) and absentee ballots, *Massachusetts residents have no excuse for not participating!* Here are some useful links:

- [Find my Elected Officials](#)
- [Register to Vote ONLINE.](#) Online registration requires a RMV ID. If you do not have an RMV ID, you can fill out the form, print it, and mail it in.
- [Voting for Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Absentee Voting](#)
- and... last but not least, [How to Run for President](#) (Don't you wish it wasn't quite so easy??)

Please contact us at MWCIL if you have questions or need help registering or voting.

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

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