

RI DISABILITY VOTE PROJECT

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Participate, Vote, Succeed

Disability Vote Action:

The Email Newsletter of the RI Disability Vote Project

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Issue 6 Contents:

Budget Proposals and Response

Legislative Letter

Convention Update

Upcoming Items and Events: "Politics, Movies, and Physical Disability", Transition Night, Brain Injury Conference, New England Performs, Newport Accessibility Tour, Disability Culture Activist at Sedimentations Conference

Dear Friend,

Happy President's Day! This is the sixth email newsletter of the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project. This newsletter contains updates about the Project, notices about local disability events, and action alerts either sponsored by the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project or referred to us by other disability organizations. If you would not like to receive this email newsletter, or if you know of someone else who would like to be added to the list, please email Lee Strauss. Her email address is **ampersand1@cox.net**. Please email Project Organizer James deBoer if you have items that you would like to submit for future newsletters.

Now that the elections are over, the state legislature has convened and begun their session. While our presence at the statehouse for the inauguration certainly had an impact, the budget that the governor has proposed, and that the state legislature must now decide upon, has some serious shortcomings. There are cuts proposed in most areas of disability. Even programs that have proven popular and effective may not get properly funded in the future.

One RIDVP Steering Committee member and mental health advocate was so frustrated by this situation that he has written a letter to the editor:

To the Editor,

The public should be aware that there are some serious proposals to cut back and even eliminate some mental health services in the State of Rhode Island. I would be directly affected by these possible changes, as well as thousands of other mental health consumers in the State. The care and treatment I have received from The Providence Center (a community based mental health organization), has enabled me to live a vibrant, full and productive quality of life over the last eighteen years. I have been in complete remission for over thirteen years. Right now, I receive therapy as part of my treatment. If more cuts happen, I could lose this very valuable asset which has helped me so much in my successful recovery. These proposed cutbacks will have a devastating effect on me and my fellow consumers. The leadership of this country (both federal and state) needs to think very carefully before throwing some of our country's least fortunate citizens under the bus.

Jon Dupré, Providence

The RIDVP intends to work with member organizations to increase our voice through education, advocacy, and voting, the only way that we can make sure our community always has access to the basics that we need. If you want to stay in the loop about upcoming legislation and its impact on the disability interest community,

please take a look at the legislative letter, published by the Governor's Commission on Disabilities. You can sign up to receive the letter, or learn more, by opening the first legislative letter of the session, attached to this email.

We must do everything in our power to encourage people with disabilities to vote! Our founding convention, "First Vote 2007!" is scheduled on Wednesday, April 4th from 9:00am to 1:00pm. We hope that you've registered already. You can download a registration form at www.ridvp.org, (our temporary website).

One of the most important things that we'll do at the convention is strategic planning. We want YOUR help in planning for the next couple of years. After you register you'll receive the work group preferences form to let us know what area is most interesting to you. Please be sure to submit this form by March 1st! (Speaking of which – could anyone lend us a few flip-chart easels? We have three so far and need about eight. It would really save a lot of money. Please let us know!)

Finally, some upcoming events before and after April 4th:

2/16/07 "Politics, Movies, and Physical Disability" a discussion and multimedia presentation with Martin Norden, sponsored by RIC's Diversity Committee. 12:30pm – 2:00pm, in the Donovan Dining Room South. The presenter is the author of [The Cinema of Isolation: A History of Physical Disability in the Movies](#).

3/1/07 Transition Night. The Newport County Regional Special Education Program in conjunction with the East Bay Regional Transition Center & the RI Parent Information Network cordially invite you to attend "Transition Night" Thursday, March 1st, 2007, 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM. The location will be the Portsmouth High School Cafeteria, at 120 Education Lane in Portsmouth.

3/7/07 The Changing World of Brain Injury. 7:45 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick. Conference features Susan H. Connors, the President and CEO of the Brain Injury Association of America, and Dr. Steven R. Flanagan, Kathy M. Helmick, Tadeusz Szykowski, and Joan M. Gardiner. Registration is due 2/28/07, registration fees range from \$10 (scholarship for survivor or family member only) to \$100 for professionals. For more information, please call 461-6599.

3/8/07 – 3/11/07 and 3/31/07 New England Performs! Lorna Ricci, from the Ocean State Center for Independent Living, brought this event to our attention. The Rotary Club of Warwick is hosting a fundraiser to benefit local organizations, and they are looking for talent show performers. The first place prize will be \$3,000, and there is an entry fee to register. Please go to www.newenglandperforms.com or call 862-5466 for more information.

5/9/07 Newport Accessibility Tour, 9:00am. The tour will be an educational experience for people to learn about accessibility from the perspective of people with (different) disabilities. Please stay tuned for more details.

5/18/07 – 5/20/07 Sedimentations: An Art Culture Nature Conference, hosted in part by disability culture activist Petra Koppers. Conference Site: Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Charlestown, Rhode Island (Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex)

Program: <<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~petra/sedimentationprogram.htm>

Registration: <<http://www-personal.umich.edu/~petra/sedimentationsregistration.htm>>

Thanks so much, see you soon!