



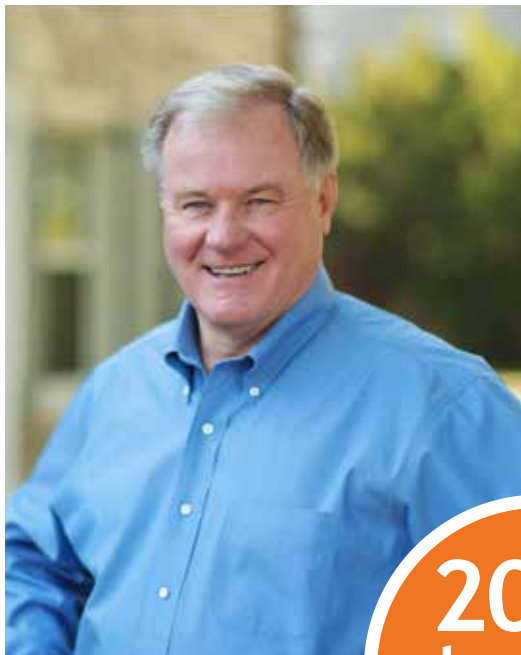
**The Arc**<sup>™</sup>

*Pennsylvania*

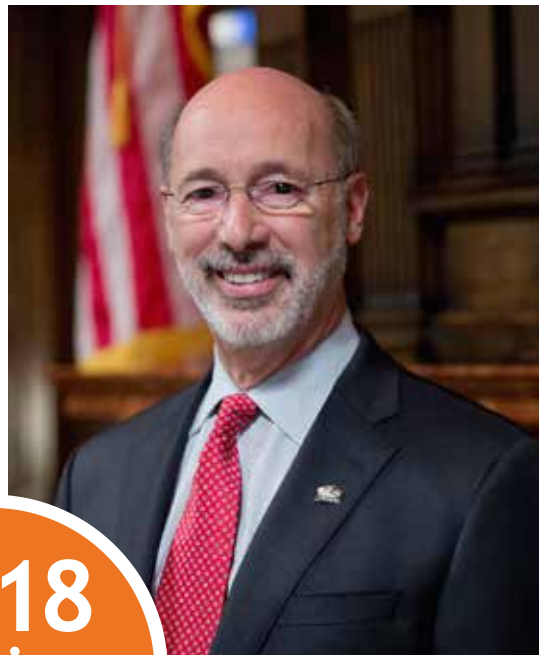
Fall 2018 - Volume LVII, Issue 3

# Pennsylvania Message

## MAKING YOUR VOTE COUNT!



Mr. Scott Wagner



Governor Tom Wolf



### Questions & Answers on Issues of Concern to The Disability Community with Pennsylvania's Candidates for Governor

**1.** The Arc of Pennsylvania with over 8,000 members and 33 local chapters, is Pennsylvania's largest disability advocacy organization. We work to protect and enhance the rights of people with disabilities so that they can live, learn, work, and thrive in their community. As any other Pennsylvanian, people with disabilities want to be recognized as full and participating citizens. As Governor, how will you involve people with disabilities in your administration? How will members of your administration seek to be informed by people with disabilities and their families before changes are made that impact their lives?

TURN TO PAGE 4 FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



# President's Message Michael Marsh



## DISABILITY VOTE MATTERS

Welcome to the Fall edition of The PA Message. As students and teachers head back to school and the wild weather of hurricane season has begun, I'm glad to have The Arc as a constant force for positive change and support of people with I/DD (Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities).

This issue is especially important because it is election season. As I write this, primaries are happening all over the country and everyone is gearing up for mid-term elections for Congress and for Pennsylvania. We have vital decisions to make about who will lead our Commonwealth. The Arc of PA is classified as a non-profit organization and we are a non-partisan organization which fits us well. Our members come from every part of the ideological/political

spectrum, but share a common belief that all citizens should live their best lives with the freedom to make choices in a supported environment. This is very much where our work intersects with the government.

The Arc of PA has, for many years, asked government officials who are running for top offices to help our members and constituents understand their beliefs and values. We do this by asking them to complete a questionnaire focused on supporting people with I/DD and their families/supporters. Their answers are included in this issue. Please take the time to review the responses so that you can make an informed decision on Election Day.

The Arc of PA is not affiliated with nor aligned with any political party. The Arc of PA does not make political contributions, nor do we endorse specific candidates.

However, The Arc of PA does give candidates the opportunity to consider how their positions and plans can help people with I/DD and their families. We strongly encourage every eligible citizen of the Commonwealth to register and then vote. It is not only a privilege of living in our country but a responsibility that each of us should consider seriously. Polling locations are required to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities and provide assistance in voting for those who need it. If this is a new process for you, please talk with people you trust. Get informed. Make arrangements to VOTE!! Make sure your voice is heard. Encourage your family, friends, colleagues, and other supporters to vote.

Finally, I wish the very best to all of our students and teachers as this new school year kicks off. We look forward to another great year of Include Me from the Start and our Discovery programs. All are making a real difference across our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,  
Michael J. Marsh  
President, Board of Directors

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## Executive Director's Message Maureen Cronin



As the Executive Director of Pennsylvania's largest disability organization people often ask me, "How can I get involved? How can I make a difference?" My answer is always - Use your power! Use Your voice! VOTE!

In our society, being able to vote allows us to express our opinions by voting for a particular candidate or issue. We use our vote to vote for the candidate or issue that represents our interests. I believe that voting is one of the most important responsibilities of being a responsible citizen. In America's democracy, we value our ability to choose who is in office, and revel in the fact that we have a say in what goes on in our community, our Commonwealth, and in our country.

The Arc of Pennsylvania is in the middle of a campaign to Get Out the Vote. We were inspired by young Christopher who voted for the first time in this year's primary. He proudly posted a picture on his Facebook page. For this campaign, we collected information from self-advocates from across the Commonwealth - sharing their reasons for voting.

I am truly humbled by the reasons that people gave for why they vote. They vote to have a voice, to stand up for the rights of people with disabilities, to speak for others who can't speak for themselves. Their comments make me proud to be part of an organization that supports "all voices"; an organization that seeks to assure that all voices are heard.

Can you imagine a time when certain groups of people could not vote? Sadly, this was the reality for people living in the United States for many years. Up until 1920, only white men could vote. Then the voices of African Americans and women were heard, and they obtained the right to vote. For many years, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities were not encouraged to vote. Their voice was not heard. That is changing, and The Arc of PA is key to that change.

It is our job to make sure that issues that affect people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, is heard. We do that by voting, by sharing personal stories, and by sharing how decisions made impact your life with decisionmakers at every level.

How can you get involved?

- 1) Know the Issues. Check out this issue of the PA Message for information from PA candidates.
- 2) Attend community events and Town Hall Meetings sponsored by your candidates.
- 3) Contact your local Arc Chapter or The Arc of PA to learn about the ways you can be active in your community.
- 4) After the election, communicate regularly with your local legislator through email, letter writing, phone, or in-person meetings.

Stay connected to us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



### DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

Maureen Cronin  
Executive Director

## GO GREEN

The Pennsylvania Message is now available via email. Please send your full name, local chapter, and email address to: [ahouser@thearcpa.org](mailto:ahouser@thearcpa.org) to receive your electronic copy.

# Inclusive. Dedicated. Determined.



**GOVERNOR WOLF:** From day one of my administration, I, along with members of my team, have been committed to engaging directly with stakeholders to ensure commonwealth policies meet their needs. Senior members of my administration, as well as myself, have had numerous meetings with people with disabilities, their families, and community advocates to make sure my agenda aligns with what they need. This commitment to engaging directly with stakeholders will continue to be a cornerstone of my policy

development process and meeting with The Arc and the people and families you serve will continue to be a priority for me.

One of the policies I have pursued based on conversations with stakeholders is to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to access integrated employment, not just in businesses across the state, but within commonwealth government as well. As part of my Employment First initiative, which aims to help people with disabilities find integrated employment opportunities, my administration launched a summer internship program for students with disabilities. This program gives students the opportunity to work in state agencies related to their fields of study and interests. This is a great opportunity for students with disabilities to gain work experience and build connections with potential employers. I also recently announced a first-of-its kind state partnership with Microsoft Corporation to provide training and other resources on accessibility to employees. When I signed House Bill 1641, modeled after the Employment First Executive Order, into law, two new committees were created to ensure state government and stakeholders are working together to improve opportunities for individuals with disabilities to work in integrated settings. The Governor’s Cabinet for People with Disabilities and the Employment First Oversight Commission will review existing regulations and policies and recommend changes to ensure implementation of Employment First.

Additionally, the Governor’s Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities will also continue to monitor the hiring, retention, and promotion practices of the commonwealth in order to ensure that there are no discriminatory practices relating to the employment of people with disabilities.

Involving people with disabilities in my administration and working with the disability community to learn how my administration can better protect and enhance their rights and quality of life has been and will remain one of my top priorities as governor.



**MR. WAGNER:** This year, Act 36 became law, which created the Governor’s Cabinet for People with Disabilities. The Cabinet was established to provide a detailed review of existing regulations and policies and set forth recommendations to ensure that Pennsylvanians living with disabilities have access to the necessary resource and support. As Governor, my administration and I will use this Cabinet to not only provide a seat at the table for those with disabilities but also to rely on the Cabinet to advise where additional resources or policy changes are needed to provide ongoing support and a voice to those with disabilities and their families.

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## Make Your Voice Heard

My name is Michael Anderson and I am a legislative advocate for The Arc of Philadelphia. I live in Merion Station, which is in Montgomery County. I vote for a number of reasons:

- ✓ I was raised by my parents with the importance of voting and I think it is a civic duty to vote in all elections.
- ✓ I also think if I don’t vote, the politicians will think that people with disabilities don’t matter. They would try to cut programs that matter to me, such as funding for attendant care, job coaching, SSI (Supplemental Security Income), SSDI (Social Security Disability Insurance), and assistive technology.
- ✓ If we don’t vote, I think people both with and without disabilities will be taken for granted, instead of being treated as significant and important parts of the population in this country.
- ✓ For this plethora of reasons that I just listed, I think it’s important for everyone to have their voices heard.



**2.** While all children grow and develop in unique ways, some children experience delays in their development. Pennsylvania's Birth to Three Early Intervention Program provides comprehensive supports and services to improve the lives of children with disabilities and their families. Participating in Early Intervention establishes a positive outcome for future success; success in school and success as a working adult. Yet, these beneficial services are now in jeopardy. Rates for Early Intervention services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech language therapy, and special instruction have not increased in 10 years, depending on the region of the state. As Governor, describe how your administration will put children first and establish reasonable rates for the provision of these life changing services.



**GOVERNOR WOLF:** In a very tough economic environment, I have worked hard to restore the \$1 billion education cuts made by the prior administration, protect investments for vulnerable Pennsylvanians, and grow initiatives wherever possible. This includes serving an additional 7,575 individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism in the community and creating a new waiver program to help individuals with disabilities who are leaving the school system. But I know more work needs to be done. I recognize the need to increase rates for Early Intervention so that Pennsylvania's youngest residents have access to services essential to their growth and development. And I am committed to working with stakeholders to move an initiative forward.



**MR. WAGNER:** As Governor, I will strive to provide adequate funding to those programs and services in Pennsylvania that guarantee a successful measurable outcome. I will ensure that funding is being used appropriately for those services and programs providing development support to our youngest Pennsylvanians. In my Education Plan, "An Opportunity for Every Child to Succeed," I highlighted the need for access to quality pre-k for every child, as well as the importance of implementing a successful early literacy program. Access to successful and inclusive childhood education is key to developing lifelong learners and I will make sure every child has access to those quality early childhood opportunities.

**3.** Pennsylvania's system of community services for people with disabilities is in crisis. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide daily hands on supports to Pennsylvanians with an intellectual disability or autism while earning an average wage of \$11.50/hour. Government funding for DSP wages has been made available, but not consistently applied across the Commonwealth. For many DSPs, wages have not increased in over 10 years. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) are being paid wages that are 25%-50% below the living wage in Pennsylvania. Individuals with disabilities and their families rely on these professionals to work and live in their community yet are unable to find and maintain quality staff to meet their daily needs because of inadequate levels of reimbursement. As Governor, how will your administration tackle this critical problem which impacts the lives of people with disabilities and their families.

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## Make Your Voice Heard



I am Zach Hicks and I am 29 years old. I have voted for the past 12 years.

I vote because I want to choose who best represents me in government and will do what is best for me and my community and my country. I am proud to be a USA citizen and it makes me feel good to express my choices when I cast my vote.

*Zach Hicks, Dauphin County*

## WHY I VOTE?

"I VOTE BECAUSE IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO AND I CAN HAVE A SAY SO AND WE BELONG IN THIS WORLD."

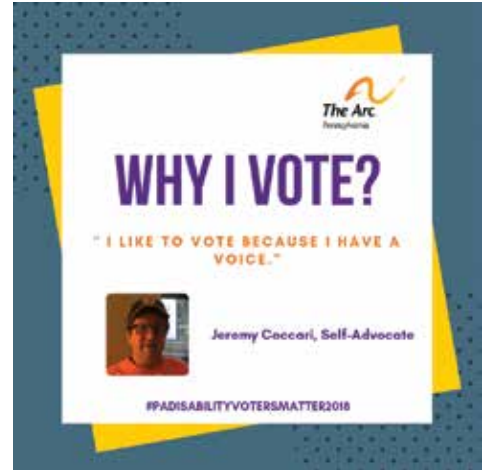


Cheryl Parrino, Self-Advocate

#PADISABILITYVOTERSMATTER2018



**GOVERNOR WOLF:** I have been an ardent supporter of a living wage for all Pennsylvanians. I recognize that being a Direct Support Professional is hard work and deserves fair pay. In order to achieve this, my administration increased provider rates in the 2017-18 fiscal budget. All providers across the commonwealth saw a significant increase in payment and many were able to increase wages to \$13 per hour or higher. In addition, the Department of Human Services has included in a proposed regulation an unprecedented requirement to review the rates every three years to ensure that they will not remain stagnant. By increasing rates, we will continue to increase the wages of our hard working Direct Support Professionals.



**MR. WAGNER:** A successful long-term care system is dependent upon a quality workforce of direct care workers. I would support an increase in the Medicaid rate to ensure this vital component of our long-term care system are able to obtain a liveable wage. While this is an important step to maintaining this workforce, we must also take steps to elevate this profession. I would support a proposal to adopt a certification program which would not only provide further training and support in their careers, but could also serve as a career builder for the profession. I would further support the creation of a Direct Care Worker Committee composed of advocates, workers, providers, and trainers to create the curriculum for the certification for the training program and address current and future issues affecting this workforce. Taking these steps will enable Pennsylvania to address the current shortages, high turnover rate, and inadequate wages currently facing this profession.

**4.** “Employment First” is the policy of all Commonwealth executive branch agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor. This policy reflects the Commonwealth’s goal of making the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a model state when it comes to creating a climate hospitable to workers with a disability. Yet, the unemployment rate for Pennsylvanians with a disability is consistently twice that of the general population and in some areas, much worse. People with disabilities can and want to work. As Governor, describe your commitment to continuing Pennsylvania’s Employment First policy? How will your administration fully implement Pennsylvania’s Employment First policy and involve other key stakeholders in this direction?



**GOVERNOR WOLF:** Pennsylvanians with a disability are valued members of society who deserve to have the opportunity to work, and they add significant value to the workplace. In 2016, I signed an executive order establishing the Employment First policy which seeks to increase competitive integrated employment for Pennsylvanians with a disability.



I recently signed HB 1641 into law which created the Employment First Act, continuing Pennsylvania’s mission to be a model state that is hospitable to workers with disabilities. This law also created the Governor’s Cabinet for People with Disabilities and the Employment First Oversight Commission, which will be responsible for recommending changes to laws, regulations, policies, and procedures that ensure implementation of Employment First.

Additionally, as part of the Employment First Initiative, I recently announced the Vanpool Incentive Program. This program was developed by PennDOT to provide affordable, ADA-accessible transportation

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for people to commute to work. This is another example of the innovative ways that my administration seeks to enhance our workforce and eliminate barriers to employment, and I will continue to explore new ways to support Pennsylvanians with disabilities.



**MR. WAGNER:** Act 36 of 2018 further established the Employment First Oversight Commission. This Commission is tasked with setting forth the goals and objectives of the Employment First policy and evaluating the progress of this policy through an annual report. My administration will rely on this report to ensure that progress is being made in providing integrated employment as well as employment services and opportunities to Pennsylvanians. I will work with the

General Assembly and our agencies to guarantee that those effective policies are implemented necessary to support the Employment First policy.



**5.** For 69 years, The Arc of Pennsylvania has worked to ensure that children and adults with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities receive the supports and services they need to live in their community and have control over their own lives. Yet 5,000 individuals with disabilities continue to wait for critical home and community-based services. Many individuals and their families endure years on a waiting list - families with aging caregivers, individuals facing dire caregiving situations. As Governor, describe how you will prioritize the needs of these Pennsylvanians? How will you expand access to supports and services to these Pennsylvanians?



**GOVERNOR WOLF:** I am committed to expanding access to high-quality care and getting people off of waiting lists for care. I have fought hard to increase opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism to live in their communities. Since I have taken office, we have served an additional 7,575 individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism in the community. The most recent budget includes an additional \$74 million increase for services for individuals with intellectual disabilities and autism.

I also recently closed the Hamburg State Center as part of my commitment to helping more Pennsylvanians move out of institutional care and into community settings. This is a big step for improving the quality of life of Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

I have made it a top priority to fight hard for this community and to be a good partner, but I recognize that there is still a lot of work to be done. We need to continue to invest in community-based services, and I have a track record of prioritizing these services. I look forward to continuing to work with The Arc of Pennsylvania to continue making strides towards ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to live in their community.



**MR. WAGNER:** We should be supportive of the choices that individuals, caregivers, and their families make in regard to long term care and services. The current application process is tedious and overly complicated. As Governor, I will work with the General Assembly to address these issues with comprehensive legislation. I will sign legislation permitting presumptive eligibility in determination for Medicaid for home-based care. I will further be supportive of plans that address the current issues with our emergency and critical waiting list as well as implementation of processes to streamline and standardize eligibility and re-eligibility. Ensuring this legislation becomes law will provide those living with disabilities access to cost-effective care in a timely manner.



### IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

ELECTION DAY Is November 6, 2018

October 9, 2018 - Last day to register to vote

October 30, 2018 - The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot

## VOTING - A RIGHT AND A DUTY



The right to vote is the most important right of being a citizen of the United States of America. When I turned 18, three years ago, I was so excited to vote in my very first election! I have continued to vote since then. Having the right to vote is crucial to me, as a female and as a black. The right to vote cannot be taken lightly. We must remember the lives that were lost and blood that was shed for minorities to overcome the legal and political barriers that blocked this basic right.

As a young adult, a female, a minority, and an individual diagnosed with an intellectual disability, I strongly encourage ALL to make sure you register to vote and then cast your vote in all future elections. Not only do you have the right to vote but you have a duty to vote, and you have a duty to encourage your family and friends to exercise their right to vote.

*Emerald Gray, Self-Advocate, Dauphin County*

## VOTE SO YOUR VOICE CAN BE HEARD

**Robert Torres, Acting Secretary of State, Pennsylvania Department of State**

As Pennsylvania's chief election officer, it is my responsibility to see that every eligible citizen in the commonwealth has a true opportunity to vote. Voting is one of our most fundamental rights as Americans. When you cast a ballot, you honor all those who fought for that right and advocated in the halls of power that every American might exercise that right.

Voting also determines the future by deciding our leadership and the course our country will take. It is a right and an opportunity none of us should take for granted. I am committed to both keeping the ballot box secure from outside interference and making it easily accessible to all eligible voters, including voters with disabilities.

In February, I issued a directive to all counties that any new voting equipment bought from now on, must have a voter-verifiable paper record. In April, the Department of State also directed counties to select new voting systems by the end of 2019.

The purpose of these directives is to ensure that Pennsylvania voters are using the most secure, auditable, accessible, and resilient voting machines available. An equally important priority is that all eligible voters, including people with disabilities, have access to the voting booth and can vote privately and independently. That's why the department has developed new standards for both security and accessibility that vendors must meet in order for their voting systems to be certified for use in Pennsylvania.

Representatives of several disability-rights groups recently tried out some of the new voting systems on the market at a vendor demonstration forum we sponsored in April. We are also working with various advocacy groups to recruit poll workers with disabilities and to give poll workers more training on accessibility issues.

We are doing our part to make the voting process easier and more accessible for everyone. Now, I encourage you to do your part. Register to vote or verify your voter registration at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). The deadline to register to vote in the November election is **October 9<sup>th</sup>**.

**THEN BE SURE TO VOTE EVERY ELECTION DAY SO YOUR VOICE CAN BE HEARD.**



The PA Department of State has a dedicated site where you can:

- ✓ Register to vote
- ✓ Check your voter registration status
- ✓ Find your polling place
- ✓ Contact your election office
- ✓ Apply for an absentee ballot

[www.VOTESPA.com](http://www.VOTESPA.com)







Congressman Lou Barletta

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

## UNITED STATES SENATE CANDIDATES



Senator Bob Casey

**1.** The Arc of Pennsylvania with over 8,000 members and 33 local chapters, is Pennsylvania’s largest disability advocacy organization. We work to protect and enhance the rights of people with disabilities so that they can live, learn, work, and thrive in their community. As any other Pennsylvanian, people with disabilities want to be recognized as full and participating citizens. As a United States Senator, how will you advance the rights of people with disabilities at the federal level? How will your office seek to be informed by people with disabilities and their families before changes are made that impact their lives?



**CONGRESSMAN BARLETTA:** I am committed to ensuring access to the resources needed to assist those with disabilities so that they can live their lives to the fullest. In my time in Congress, I have looked for ways to support policies which balance limited resources with

the important need to assist people with disabilities. For example, my bill, H.R. 4460, the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, ensures individuals with disabilities are able to repair or replace accessibility-related property damaged in a natural disaster.

As a mayor, I helped lead the Pine Street Revitalization project which reclaimed land and revitalized homes. These homes were built to specifications which allowed for those with disabilities to live independently such as wider doorways, master bedrooms on the ground floor, lower countertops, and other specifications.

I have also voted to preserve certain ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) protections which are important to people with disabilities. For example, I voted against H.R. 620, the ADA Education and Reform Act, which went too far in restricting legal recourse for people with disabilities when businesses fail to provide ease of access to architectural barriers.

The issues of disabled Pennsylvanians are a top concern for me, and, if I were to be elected to the U.S. Senate, I would make it a priority to stay fully informed on the issues most important to this community. As I have done in the House of Representatives, I will keep informed of the issues through regular meetings in my Washington office as well as a direct line to my staff whenever an issue may arise of concern.



**SENATOR CASEY:** As Senator, I have consistently fought to advance the rights of people with disabilities. However, I cannot do this work without the counsel of the disability community. “Nothing about us, without us” is a core precept of my work with the disability community.

To that end, when I became the ranking member of the Senate Aging Committee, I hired a disability policy director. To my knowledge, that person is the only permanent, full-time dedicated disability policy staffer in the Senate. I also work to employ people with disabilities, and recently benefitted greatly from the service of an Aging Committee fellow with an intellectual disability. In addition, my office has maintained close relationships with disability advocacy groups across the Commonwealth and nationally, and consults with them regularly on legislation and other issues that may impact them.

**WHY I VOTE?**

*"I vote because it is my responsibility and it's the right thing to do - to help elect people to make policies and change policies to help people like myself."*



MARIA MARTIN,  
SELF-ADVOCATE

#PADISABILITYVOTERSMATTER2018

To ensure that our nation’s policy decisions are viewed through the lens of disability impact, earlier this summer I introduced legislation to establish the Office of Disability Policy. If established, this office will provide analysis of proposed legislation and regulations so that Congress can understand the impact of proposed actions on the disability community before the policies are enacted and implemented.

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**2.** The nation's budget priorities must include funding for programs that promote independence and self-determination of people with disabilities. Federal and state revenue must be sufficient to fund the programs that people with disabilities rely on to be healthy participants at school, work, and their community. Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Medicaid are essential to people with disabilities and their families. With these dollars, families are able to keep children at home rather than in institutions; adults are able to live successfully in their community with the services to make that successful; and employees receive the support needed to work and pay taxes. How will you work to maintain adequate funding for critical home and community-based services for Pennsylvanian's with disabilities? How will you continue to support the home and community-based service requirements?



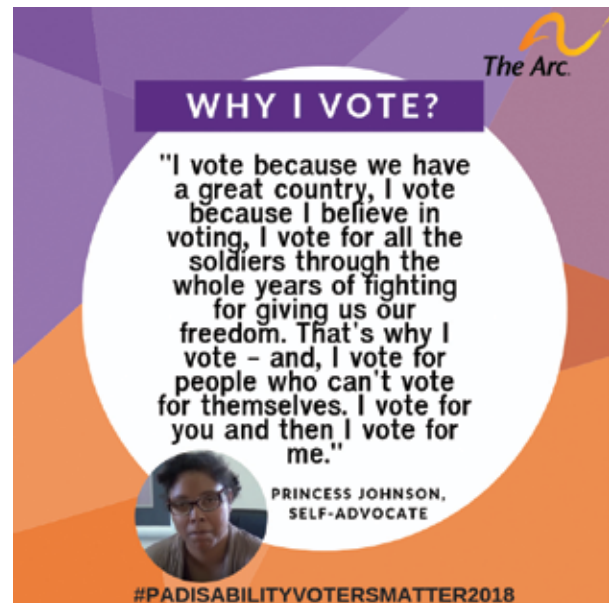
**CONGRESSMAN BARLETTA:** Home and community-based services have provided greater flexibility and choice for those with disabilities to receive the critical care they need. The growth of telemedicine and home health care services will also help to reduce the costs of medicine for millions of Americans. In order to support this development in health care, it's important to ensure there is a supporting workforce and education for caretakers for health care demand. That's why I have supported H.R. 1676, the Palliative Care and Hospice Education and Training Act to support national training centers for palliative and hospice education. I have also cosponsored H.R. 1825, the Home Health Care Planning Improvement Act of 2017, which would allow for nurse specialists and physician assistants to order home health services under Medicare. This will ensure beneficiaries have timely access to home health care and reduce costs for Medicare.



**SENATOR CASEY:** I have been a consistent champion for ensuring adequate funding for home and community-based services. I led efforts in the Senate to fight attempts to decimate Medicaid as part of Republican legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act. I have also been a vocal supporter of the 2014 CMS (Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services) rule which stipulates that people need access to inclusive living and employment settings. I am a strong supporter of the Disability Integration Act, which seeks to make community integration an obligation, not just an option. There can be no true self-determination for people with

disabilities without home and community-based services, and I pledge to continue efforts to expand such services, and to fight against efforts to roll them back.

**3.** "Employment First" is the policy of all Commonwealth executive branch agencies under the jurisdiction of the Governor. This policy reflects the Commonwealth's goal of making the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a model state when it comes to creating a climate hospitable to workers with a disability. Yet, the unemployment rate for Pennsylvanians with a disability is consistently twice that of the general population and in some areas, much worse. People with disabilities can and want to work. As a United States Senator, describe your commitment to continuing an Employment First policy on the federal level? How will your office involve other key stakeholders in this direction?



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**CONGRESSMAN BARLETTA:** I believe it is important to help all Americans achieve gainful employment so that they can live life to the fullest. The federal government provides opportunities for people with disabilities which should be maintained.

It is also important to give people with disabilities tools to save more money in their ABLÉ accounts. That's why it was important Congress included the ABLÉ to Work Act in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. ABLÉ to Work Act allows for those with an ABLÉ account who earns income for a job to save up to the federal poverty level in addition to their contribution limit of \$14,000.

As a mayor and in Congress, I have supported Job Corps programs which also help people with disabilities. In Congress, I worked across party lines to reverse student level cuts at Job Corp centers. These centers also provide employment experience for people with disabilities and I was proud to have a role in protecting the program from cuts.



**SENATOR CASEY:** I support any policies that seek to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to competitive, integrated employment. At the federal level, I have done a number of things to promote the economic self-determination of people with disabilities. While serving in the Senate, I passed the ABLÉ Act, which

allows people with disabilities to work and save money while still qualifying for Medicaid and SSDI (Social Security Disability Income). I believe that people should not be forced to choose between having the means to help provide for themselves and keeping the benefits they need. I have also worked to expand and improve the ABLÉ Act, passing into law the ABLÉ Financial Planning Act, so that families can rollover a college savings plan into an ABLÉ account, and also proposing legislation to modify the age limit for potential ABLÉ beneficiaries.

I have also proposed a number of tax bills to promote the employment of people with disabilities, including legislation to modify the Work Opportunity Tax Credit so that it is generous to those seeking to hire people with disabilities, the Architectural and Transportation Barrier Tax Credit, to offset the cost of making places more hospitable to people with disabilities, and a disability access tax credit to provide a financial incentive to businesses seeking to make the workplace more accessible. Finally, this year I convened a disability employment summit in Pennsylvania, bringing together the private sector and the disability community to discuss the mutual benefits of employing people with disabilities.

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**“ WHY I VOTE? ”**

I vote because I like to get my voice heard. I also like to see what both political parties do to support disability policy.

*Josh Stranix, Self-Advocate, Secretary, The Arc of PA*

The Arc #PADisabilityVotersMatter2018



**WHY I VOTE?**

"I VOTE BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF MY DISABILITY."

*Amanda Kelley, Self-Advocate*

#PADISABILITYVOTERSMATTER2018

The Arc



**CONGRESSMAN BARLETTA:** Access to the home and community-based services is important to lower the cost of government-supported health care. That's why I supported the passage of H.R. 959, Title VIII Nursing Workforce Reauthorization Act of 2018, so that we can address the shortage of home and community-based health care workers necessary to support these new avenues for health care. I have also supported H.R. 3728, the EMPOWER Act of 2018, to encourage the training of healthcare professionals including those critical to home and community-based services.

Another important issue facing every American community is the opioid crisis, which has been particularly devastating for Pennsylvania and the larger Appalachian region. In 2016, 4 in 10 non-elderly adults with an opioid addiction were covered by Medicaid, which reduces Medicaid's ability to provide services for seniors and the disabled. That's why I introduced the Treating Barriers to Prosperity Act, which would allow for the Appalachian Regional Commission funding to be used to support programs designed to eliminate or reduce barriers to workforce development, attract and retain healthcare services, businesses, and workers, and develop relevant infrastructure, including broadband access for telemedicine treatment. The Treating Barriers to Prosperity Act will help to provide treatment to those with an opioid addiction and access to critical tools they need to get back into the workforce.



**SENATOR CASEY:** We need to make sure that receiving home and community-based services aren't just an option, as under current law, but an obligation and a right. That is why I support the Community Integration Act. As noted above, I also led the fight in the Senate to protect Medicaid when Republicans sought to decimate Medicaid as part of their repeal of the Affordable Care Act. I also played a key role in the fight to save the Affordable Care Act (ACA) more broadly. Repeal of the ACA would have had a terrible impact

on the rights of people with disabilities, returning us to a time when people could be denied insurance coverage based on a pre-existing condition and rolling back vital Medicaid coverage. If the ACA is repealed, it will only increase the likelihood that many with disabilities will have to receive care in institutional settings rather than in the communities of their choice. I will continue to fight to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the benefits and services they need, and my office will assist constituents in getting every benefit they qualify for.

**5.** The American with Disabilities Act's (ADA) integration mandate and Supreme Court's Olmstead decision provide people with disabilities with critically important rights - to live, work, and receive services in the most integrated setting appropriate. These rights have enabled tens of thousands of people with disabilities to move from institutions into their own homes and communities, and to get the services they need to secure real jobs at competitive wages in the community. Share how you will make the full inclusion of people with disabilities and the protection of these rights a priority in the United States Senate. Community-based living, as opposed to institutions, is a choice that all Americans with disabilities should have.



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**CONGRESSMAN BARLETTA:** Transportation is a major impediment for those with disabilities. Reliable and on-demand transportation will help increase independence for people with disabilities. That's why I supported the passage of H.R. 3388, the SELF DRIVE Act, to encourage the development of safe automated vehicle technology. This will help to increase independence for those with disabilities and allow for them to move safely for everyday necessities.

I have also supported legislation this Congress to assist those with disabilities through ABLE accounts. H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, not only reduces taxes on 90 percent of Americans and increases economic growth, but also includes key language for those with disabilities and their families. Both H.R.1896, the ABLE to Work Act, and H.R. 1897, the ABLE Financial Planning Act, were included in H.R. 1. The ABLE to Work Act allows for those with an ABLE account who earn income to save up to the federal poverty level in addition to their contribution limit of \$14,000. The ABLE Financial Planning Act helps families of those with disabilities to save for their child's future by allowing for rollovers from a 529 account used for college savings to an ABLE account.



**SENATOR CASEY:** While the disability community has made great strides in recent years, I strongly believe that the full inclusion and self-determination of the disability community is among the unfinished and pressing civil rights challenges of our day. Until this civil rights work is done, the promise of the ADA will remain unfulfilled. I hope that the issues that I have already outlined here - Medicaid and ACA defense, the Disability Integration Act, the ABLE Act, full and integrated employment of people with disabilities, among others - shows my total commitment to the civil rights of people with disabilities. Of course, I remain in constant dialogue with the community regarding additional work that we can pursue together.

**6. Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) principles are the cornerstones for the education of students with disabilities. Monitoring and oversight of schools are necessary to ensure students with disabilities are accessing their rights under FAPE and LRE. Educating children with disabilities alongside their peers - or providing opportunities for them to regularly interact if they are attending school-based programs geared towards students with disabilities - builds understanding, empathy, and the skills children need to lead fulfilling lives and contribute to their communities. As a United States Senator, how will you ensure that students with disabilities will receive educational services alongside their typical peers and the training needed to graduate with a competitive job.**



**CONGRESSMAN BARLETTA:** Access to the programs that ensure people with disabilities have resources available to graduate with a competitive job is important to me, which is why I have supported Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding in appropriations bills. Moreover, I have supported steps to expand access to the important medical devices that help those with disabilities.

In Congress, I have worked to reduce barriers to access for equipment for people with disabilities. I have voted to repeal the Medical Device Tax, which penalizes many of the tools people with disabilities need daily to live freely. I also supported the ABLE Act, to allow for people with disabilities to give tax advantaged savings accounts for disability expenses like education.

I will continue to work in the future to update the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to meet the challenges of the 21st century.



**SENATOR CASEY:** I believe that students with disabilities should regularly interact with their peers. Congress has an important oversight role to play, and I will make efforts to ensure that students with disabilities get the education they deserve. In the reauthorization of federal K-12 educational policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act, I authored provisions to ensure that parents have the right to information about how students with disabilities are being tracked, as well as the alternatives. In the recent Perkins CTE (Career and Technical Education) reauthorization set aside money for states and schools to recruit people with disabilities. And with the Higher Education Act reauthorization pending, I have proposed bipartisan legislation to ensure that individuals with learning differences and disabilities have access to higher ed and to ensure that they do not have to go through needless and redundant documentation of a disability when they have already demonstrated this at the secondary level.

# DISABILITY VOTING ISSUES: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

Gabriella Labella, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Pennsylvania

**Voting is a fundamental right, privilege, and duty. It is a key means by which citizens, including those with disabilities, can impact policy at the local, state, and federal levels.**

Yet, many people with disabilities continue to encounter obstacles to voting. People with mobility disabilities may encounter physical barriers at their local polling places. People with sensory disabilities may encounter communication barriers in the registration and voting process. People with intellectual, cognitive, or mental health disabilities may be barred or intimidated from voting based on prejudice and misunderstanding about their right to vote.

## Commonly asked questions

**Does the law require that polling places be completely accessible to voters with mobility disabilities?**

In 1984, Congress enacted the Voter Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped (VAEH) Act, which states that all polling places used for federal elections must be accessible to voters with mobility disabilities and those age 65 and older. The VAEH also provides that if the state certifies that a polling place cannot be made accessible or relocated to an accessible location, then it must offer voters the opportunity to vote by “alternative ballot” up until the close of polls. Voting by alternative ballot is discussed below. Title II of The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), enacted in 1990, applies to state and local government programs and services, including elections. Title II of the ADA requires election officials to assure that all newly selected polling places are accessible and to maximize the accessibility of existing polling places by relocating inaccessible polling places to accessible sites or by

assuring that temporary modifications (such as portable ramps or threshold mats) are available and in place on Election Day.

**What does it mean for a polling place to be fully accessible?** There are a number of elements that are relevant in determining whether a polling place is fully accessible for both voters with mobility and other disabilities. At minimum, voters who use wheelchairs or have other mobility disabilities should be able to enter the polling site, travel to the voting area, and utilize the voting area independently and easily.

**What should a person do if he or she is unable to vote in his or her polling place because it is inaccessible?**

A person with a disability probably wants to make sure that his polling place is accessible before Election Day. You can find that information by looking up your polling place at [www.pavoterservices.pa.gov](http://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov). You can also check with your County Board of Elections. For information about your County Board of Elections, call 1-877-VOTES-PA (1-877-868-3772).

If your polling place is not accessible and you have a disability or are age 65 or older, you have the right to vote by alternative ballot. You must submit an application for an alternative ballot, no later than 5 p.m. the Tuesday prior to Election Day. Your completed alternative ballot must be received by the County Board of Elections no later than 8 p.m. on Election Day. Regular and emergency applications for alternative ballots can be found at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

If your polling place is not accessible and you want to vote in person, you should also consider working with your County Board of Elections to find a new polling place for your division by proposing some alternatives. You can also contact the Department of State to complain about the inaccessibility of your polling place at [www.pavoterservices.pa.gov](http://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov).

My polling place is accessible, but I cannot vote in person due to my disability. What can I do? If your polling place is accessible, but you have an illness or disability that prevents you from voting in person there, then you can submit an application to vote by absentee ballot. Your application for an absentee ballot must be submitted to your County Board of Elections no later than 5 p.m. on the Tuesday prior to Election Day. You can get an application for an absentee ballot from your County Board of Elections or at [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com).

**Do the voting machines need to be accessible to voters with mobility disabilities and visual disabilities?**

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) requires that voting systems

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**Why I vote?**

The reason I do like to vote because I am a nice human being that needs to vote for whoever I want to vote for in that in the office...I do have a disability and because of that I can still vote at the same time and that's why I like to vote.

*The Arc*

**CHRIS GRANDY, SELF ADVOCATE**  
#PADISABILITYVOTERSMATTER2018

must be accessible for people with disabilities, including those with mobility disabilities and those who are blind or have other visual disabilities. This means that there must be at least one voting machine in each polling precinct or division that is accessible for people with disabilities to assure that they have the same opportunity to vote independently and privately like other voters.

#### **Am I allowed to have someone help me in the voting machine?**

You have the right to assistance to help you use the voting machine and vote if you cannot read or write, have difficulty understanding English, cannot read the names on the ballot, or cannot operate the voting machine due to a visual, physical, or other disability. You can be assisted by a relative, friend, neighbor, aide, or another voter. You cannot receive assistance from a Judge of Elections, your union representative, or your employer. When you register to vote, you can say whether you will need assistance and, if you do, that information will be in the polling book. If you did not say that assistance was needed when you registered, and the information is not in the polling book, you still have the right to have assistance when voting as long as you sign a “Declaration of Need of Assistance Form” at the polling place.

**Do election officials have to make any other modifications for people with disabilities at the polling place?** Yes. The ADA requires that election officials make reasonable modifications to their policies, practices, and procedures when necessary for people with disabilities unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

#### **Can election officials bar a person from voting because they deem him or her not competent to vote or understand the ballot?**

No. Pennsylvania has no voting competence laws. Election officials and poll workers, therefore, cannot question the ability of a voter with an intellectual disability, mental illness, brain injury, dementia, or other cognitive limits and certainly may not bar them from exercising their right to vote. Nevertheless, out of ignorance or paternalism, some election officials or poll workers may try to discourage such individuals from voting or even try to bar them from doing so.

#### **What do I do if I encounter voting issues?**

If you encounter voting obstacles, you should contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania at the number below to report such issues in addition to filing a complaint with

the state at [www.pavoterservices.pa.gov](http://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov). If you need more information or need help, please contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania (DRP) at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TDD). The email address is: [intake@disabilityrightspa.org](mailto:intake@disabilityrightspa.org).

If you encounter any problems at your polling place on Election Day, call DRP’s Election Day hotline at 717-839-5227 or email us at [electionday@disabilityrightspa.org](mailto:electionday@disabilityrightspa.org) between 7am and 8pm on Election Day. After Election Day, contact DRP at 800-692-7443 (voice) or 877-375-7139 (TDD) or [intake@disabilityrightspa.org](mailto:intake@disabilityrightspa.org). For a complete copy of this and other Fact Sheets about voting, visit DRP’s website at [www.disabilityrightspa.org](http://www.disabilityrightspa.org).

## **Reasonable accommodations may include:**

- Assuring that voters with disabilities who use service animals are permitted to enter the polling place and voting machine.
- Making chairs available for voters unable to stand in line due to disabilities or allowing such voters to go to the front of the voting line.
- Placing the voting machine in a place with sufficient light for voters with low vision.
- Allowing voters with disabilities that limit their manual dexterity to make a mark rather than sign their name or by allowing others to sign for them. The ADA also requires election officials to make sure that their communications with people with disabilities are as effective as those provided to people without disabilities. This may require election officials to provide auxiliary aids and services to voters with sensory disabilities, such as:
  - Providing sample ballots, voting instructions, or other written materials in alternative formats, such as braille, for people with visual disabilities.
  - Providing a magnifying glass to enlarge the print on the voting machine for voters with low vision.
  - Having pen and paper available at the check-in table so that poll workers can communicate with individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing about routine matters.
  - Having qualified sign language interpreters available to travel to polling places for more complex questions or issues by voters who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  - Making sure that election agencies’ telephone communications are accessible to people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech impairments, such as using TTYs.



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**WHY I VOTE?**

"VOTING IS IMPORTANT FOR RIGHTS AND PEOPLE THAT YOU CARE ABOUT, LIKE ALEX AND EDWARD WHO CAN'T TALK."

 **DIANE BARNER**  
SELF-ADVOCATE



#PADISABILITYVOTERSMATTER2018



**WHY I VOTE?**

I VOTE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES. I THINK ITS IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO VOTE SO THEIR VOICES CAN BE RECONCILED. I ALSO WORK THE POLLS ON ELECTION DAY.

 **CHRIS SCHWENK, SELF-ADVOCATE,**  
BOARD DIRECTOR, THE ARC OF PA

#PADISABILITYVOTERSMATTER2018

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*The Arc Pennsylvania promotes the human rights of people with intellectual and development disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.*