

# *Ct. Association of Centers for Independent Living 2008 Legislative Agenda*

## ***Centers for Independent Living***

- *Assure that the CT Department of Social Services and the Connecticut General Assembly adequately fund the Centers for Independent Living so they may accomplish their state mandated mission and provide first rate services to consumers.*

## ***State Agencies***

- *Monitor the development of the new Department of Aging to insure that there is no disruption or reduction in services or programs for people with disabilities.*

## ***Civil Rights***

- *Support **HR 6258** the ADA Restoration Act of 2007 by calling and writing the Connecticut congressional delegation asking them to support the legislation, supporting the lobbying efforts of the National Council on Independent Living, communicating the goals and purpose of the bill to member Centers for Independent Living, other consumer support organizations and consumers.*

## ***ADA Restaurant Accessibility***

- *Establish a program to monitor restaurants for ADA compliance and recognize restaurants that fully comply with ADA standards.*

## ***ADA and Churches***

- *Work with the religious community to make all facilities accessible.*

## ***Employment Issues in Connecticut***

- *Educate individuals with disabilities about employment rights and support options that help secure employment in Connecticut. Prepare and/or assemble materials in multiple formats for distribution regarding rights to request reasonable accommodation in the workplace. Review and revise as necessary CACIL's consumer education strategies for informing consumers about discrimination investigation processes and remedies available through CHRO and EEOC. Support bills in the CT General Assembly similar to **SB 146** and **HB 6649** in the 2007 session that give people who qualify for, and claim, the federal earned income tax credit a refundable credit against their state income tax liability equal to 20% of their federal credit for the same income year.*

### **Health Care Issues in Connecticut**

- Support bills in the General Assembly similar to **HB 7242** in the 2007 session that would provide Medicaid coverage as a supplement to underinsured families to ensure that children with special health care needs have access to health care in a home setting. The bill ensures that children with special health care needs receive necessary and appropriate supports and services in their homes and communities and those services are affordable. CACIL will support bills in the CT General Assembly similar to **HB7242** in the 2007 session. HB7242 proposed to provide Medicaid coverage as a supplement to underinsured families to ensure that children with special health care needs have access to health care in a home setting. To ensure that children with special health care needs receive necessary and appropriate supports and services in their homes and communities and that such services are affordable.

### **Housing Issues in Connecticut**

- Over the next biennium, support the efforts of the Accessible Housing Registry to identify accessible units and increase their utilization. Expand and preserve the stock of housing for elders and persons with disabilities. Enforce current standards in Connecticut regulation and statute, including the Building Code, which require builders of new developments to create a certain percentage of wheelchair accessible units. Promote universal design with architects and housing developers. Increase outreach to landlords about resources and financing to make their units accessible. Increase the utilization of Section 8 Vouchers in communities throughout Connecticut so additional vouchers may be requested from HUD. Establish a Resident Services Coordinator in every State-funded Elderly Housing facility. Currently, there is one Resident Services Coordinator in every three facilities. Training is also needed to equip Resident Service Coordinators to serve both older adults and individuals with disabilities. Expand assisted living options beyond those available to the elderly. Ensure that all State agencies that construct or rehabilitate housing or provide rental assistance report the accessible units to the accessible housing registry. Maintain current building codes for type A units and require local building officials to report such units to the Department of Economic and Community Development as part of the building permit process.

### **Personal Care Assistants**

- Support legislation such as **HB-5302** in the 2007 session that would increase state investment in personal care assistance services and home care services so as to allow more individuals to remain in their homes and thereby avoid placement in more costly long-term care facilities. Increase the hourly rates and benefits of PCA's to meet workforce development needs.

### **Transportations Issues in Connecticut**

- Advocate for a transportation system that allows people with disabilities to travel to work on a reliable and time sensitive transportation schedule. CACIL will encourage communities to provide a more supportive infrastructure including more affordable housing, expanded and coordinated transportation options, and side walks, cross walks and curb cuts. Campaign for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

### **Taxi Cab Issues**

- *Advocate for a Connecticut standard that requires a minimum percentage of all taxi fleets be wheelchair accessible by a certain date. Furthermore, that these accessible taxis be required, by statute or regulation, to be kept in good operating condition, that all drivers be educated in their proper use, and that they be offered under the same conditions, availability and price structure as all other taxis in the fleet.*

### **Assistive Technology in Connecticut**

- *Advocate participation in the CT Tech Act Project by a new banking corporation. Assist consumers interested in applying for Tech Act loans. Lobby the Department of Social Service and the Ct. General Assembly to enhance the benefits of the CT Tech Act Program for Connecticut consumers.*

### **Education**

- *Enrollment in the highest level of academic coursework to ensure students are gaining the skills to advance to the best career opportunities; Receive an education supporting and enhancing the skills required to be successful in a variety of employment settings through school curricula; Enrollment in coursework to enhance skill development in technologies (business, computers); Exposed to a sequencing of employment curricula from career awareness to career exploration to specific skills training that matches interests and preferences; Movement of career training experiences from in-school to community-based settings; Exposure to appropriate workplace behaviors (task persistence, punctuality, effective communication); Workplace accommodations, if appropriate; Teaching self-advocacy skills so the student can articulate learning strengths and weaknesses and share information with others; Development of employment goals and objectives that includes student/family input; Development of social skills; Linkages to state agencies/community resources, if appropriate; Utilization of Assistive Technology, if appropriate.*

### **Medicaid**

- *Examine the possibility of providing greater uniformity among the different Medicaid home and community-based waivers in terms of requirements such as age and income limits, and of providing maximum flexibility and choice as to how waiver funds can be utilized. Within the confines of federal Medicaid law that prohibits combining individuals who are (1) aged and disabled, (2) intellectually disabled or developmentally disabled, or (3) mentally ill into a single waiver, the State should explore any options that may be available, particularly options that do not discriminate against persons with psychiatric disabilities. Explore the opportunity to expand home and community-based care provided by the Expanded Access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) and Presumptive Eligibility provision of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005. Explore training opportunities for conservators, guardians, families, probate system staff, medical personnel, social workers, and others about supporting choice, autonomy and dignity and the assistance available for transitioning from institutions to the community and the services available in the community after transition. Review Connecticut statutes to identify opportunities to enhance protections of persons with disabilities when there is a conservator involved.*