



Phillip Steck

Chairperson

*NYS Assembly
Task Force on
People with
Disabilities*

Inside:

Page 2

- 2019 Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day (LDAD)

Page 3

- 2019 LDAD Continued
- Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day 2020 – Coming Early

Page 4

- LDAD Poster Contest



A Message from the Chair...

January 2020

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! For those of you who I have not yet had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Phil Steck and I am the new Chair of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities. I'd like to take this chance to thank Speaker Heastie for appointing me to this position. Over the last 12 months, I have enjoyed getting to know many of New York's disability advocates who have been instrumental in educating me about the issues most affecting people with disabilities across the state. Without their input and guidance, it would be impossible for the Task Force to develop our yearly priority agenda.

It was the advocacy community who alerted us to last year's budget priorities. In an incredibly tight budget season, the Task Force was proud to play a strong role in securing an additional \$500,000 for New York's independent living centers (ILCs). We recognize that much more is needed for ILCs to be able to continue functioning effectively and we vow to join them in this year's budget season to fight for additional funding.

It was also the advocacy community who informed us about the potentially devastating cuts that were proposed by the Governor's office that would have severely and drastically altered the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP). This is a Medicaid program run through state approved fiscal intermediaries (FIs), in which consumers direct how, when and by who they receive personal care services. It allows people with disabilities the flexibility to hire, train, supervise and, if necessary, terminate their own personal care attendants. While the Legislature was not successful in halting these cuts in the budget process, the disability community held tight, and ultimately won the court case that they filed. Kudos to them for their vigilance and persistence on this issue!

As we move rapidly into the business of 2020, the Task Force is committed to standing with our disability advocates on the budgetary and legislative issues that matter most to them. If you have any questions or concerns in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 518-455-4592.

Phillip Steck, Chair
New York State Assembly
Task Force on People with Disabilities



Speaker Carl Heastie with Barbara Crosier, Vice President for Government Relations at Cerebral Palsy of New York State, recipient of the annual "Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award" at the Assembly's annual Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day in Albany last year.

For More Information

New York State Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities
Kimberly T. Hill, Director

Room 203 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248

Phone: (518) 455-4592
Fax: (518) 455-7099

hillk@nyassembly.gov

Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day



Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie addresses the crowd as Assembly Member Steck looks on at the Assembly's annual Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day in Albany on May 29, 2019.

The New York State Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities and the Committee on Mental Health hosted the annual Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day (LDAD) on Wednesday, May 29, 2019 in Albany. The event was sponsored by Speaker Carl Heastie, Minority Leader Brian M. Kolb, Assembly Members Phillip Steck, Aileen Gunther and Melissa Miller.

Barbara Crosier, Vice President for Government Relations at Cerebral Palsy of New York State, was presented with the annual "Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. Advocacy Award," which honors

an individual each year who has dedicated him or herself to advocacy on behalf of people with disabilities. This award is given in the name of Dr. Henry Viscardi, Jr. because he was a legendary activist and supporter of disability rights. As in prior years, nearly 50 organizations that serve the disability community displayed exhibits to provide information and demonstrate the services and opportunities that are available to people with disabilities. Also, two seminars on disability issues were held on the following topics:

- **Know Your Rights** – Service Animals and Emotional Support Animals Under the Law
- **NY Able** – How to Save Money Without Impacting Your Federal Benefits Eligibility

2019 LDAD Legislation Agenda

As part of LDAD tradition, the Assembly passed a package of legislation aimed at making the lives of people with disabilities easier. Last year's legislative package included:

Disability Rights

- **A.1092** – This bill would waive the state's sovereign immunity with regard to application of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 as they apply to the protection of state employees as well as the State and political subdivisions.



Assembly Member Phillip Steck addresses the crowd gathered in the Well of the Legislative Office Building for the first time as Chair of the Assembly Task Force on People with Disabilities.

- **A.4737** – This bill will reestablish the Office of Advocate for People with Disabilities to advocate on behalf of persons with disabilities and assure that persons with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to exercise all of the rights and responsibilities accorded to all citizens of the state of New York, including the opportunity to live an independent life in their local community.
- **A.3385-A** – This bill would require public officers and bodies to provide interpreters and assistive listening devices for deaf or hard of hearing individuals at public hearings under certain conditions.
- **A.7473** – This bill would increase the allowable maximum account balance in the NY ABLE Program to an amount equal to the federally authorized level for the 529 College Savings Program.

Education

- **A.7251** – This bill would reauthorize the current law that requires publishers or manufacturers of printed instructional materials for college students to provide electronic formats of printed instructional material to be available for purchase for students with disabilities.

Elections

- **A.163** – This bill requires the board of elections to post a copy of a sample ballot, including electronically for use with a computer screen-reading program, on its website prior to each election as soon as the relevant information becomes available.

Emergency Preparedness

- **A.3923** – This bill would aid localities in preparing for and responding to disasters by requiring counties with local emergency management plans to maintain a confidential registry of people of all ages with disabilities who may require evacuation assistance and shelter during a disaster. People would be provided with the option to be included in the registry.

Employment

- **A.7475** – This bill would establish a small business tax credit for the employment of people with disabilities.

Health Care

- **A.4236** – This bill would provide factors to be considered when the health care practitioner utilized by the local social services district examines an applicant for or recipient of public assistance with regards to a possible work limitation or exemption due to a disability; require such health care practitioner utilized by the local social services district to provide an explicit written determination and to present evidence when their diagnosis differs from that of the treating health care practitioner.
- **A.7492** – This bill would require the Commissioner of Health to maintain specific reimbursement and billing procedures within Medicaid for complex rehabilitation technology products and services to ensure that payments for such products and services permit adequate access to complex needs patients and take into account the significant resources, infrastructure, and staff needed to meet their needs.

Housing

- **A.2493** – This bill would create a tax credit for either new or retrofitted principal residences which are universally designed to be accessible and adaptable housing.

Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day 2020 – Coming Early

Our invitation was mailed out recently, however we wanted to take this opportunity to pass along this information here as well – Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day 2020 will be held much earlier than in years passed. This year it will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2020. Because we need to move the day much closer to the beginning of the year, some of the events of the day might be shifted to different times than we're used to, but our plan is to maintain the components of the day. Please be on the lookout for additional information and more specific details in the days to come. And please mark your calendars because we hope you all can make it!

Disabilities Awareness Day Poster Contest

For the last several years, the Assembly has incorporated an elementary school poster contest as a component of LDAD. We sponsor this contest because educating today's children both about the challenges that people with disabilities face and the contributions they make to society will make tomorrow's leaders much less tolerant of discrimination. Nineteen students from Assembly Member Cusick's district received awards for their perceptive and creative entries into our annual elementary school poster contest.

First Place Winners:

- Evan Mardakh
P.S. 3, Kindergarten
- Dominick Bernard
P.S. 42, First Grade
- Emanuele Schembari
P.S. 6, Second Grade
- Dayanara Landeros
P.S. 42, Third Grade
- Salvatore D'Alessandro
P.S. 36, Fourth Grade
- Jonai Prince
St. Christopher School, Fifth Grade

Second Place Winners:

- Derek Liu
P.S. 3, Kindergarten
- Gadiel Garcia
St. Christopher School, First Grade

- Frank Rizzi
St. Adalbert School, Second Grade
- Skylar Hansen
P.S. 6, Third Grade
- Addison Gualtieri
P.S. 36, Fourth Grade
- Erik Canseco & Wayne King
P.S. 80 – The Petrides School, Fifth Grade

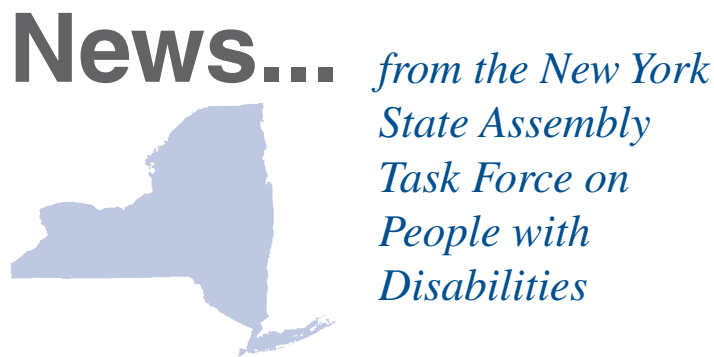
Third Place Winners:

- Kaylee Prusak
St. Adalbert School, Kindergarten
- Dominic Terranova
P.S. 42, First Grade
- Samuel Vardanian
St. Christopher School, Second Grade
- Olivia DiTizio
P.S. 3, Third Grade
- Alexia Tuccio
P.S. 6, Fourth Grade
- Marco Michielli
P.S. 80 – The Petrides School, Fifth Grade

We would like to thank everyone who participated in the 2019 Legislative Disabilities Awareness Day for making it such a great success and we look forward to seeing you at LDAD again this year.

“It is easier to build strong children than repair broken men.” – Frederick Douglass

New York State Assembly, Albany, New York 12248



PRSRT STD.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Albany, New York
Permit No. 75

Phillip Steck, Chair ■ Carl Heastie, Speaker



Assembly Members Michael Cusick and Michael Reilly celebrate the accomplishments of poster contest winners, bottom row left to right: Emanuele Schembari, Frank Rizzi, Gadiel Garcia, Dominic Terranova, Skylar Hansen, Evan Mardakh, Derek Liu. Top row left to right: Jonai Prince, Dayanara Landeros, Addison Gualtieri, Alexia Tuccio, Salvatore D'Alessandro, Wayne King, Olivia DiTizio.