



Constitutional Amendment moves to NJ Senate floor

The New Jersey Senate’s State Government Committee unanimously moved an amendment to remove the words “idiot” and “insane” from the state constitution. All members of the committee signed on as cosponsors after listening to testimony from several self-advocates and state officials at a public hearing on January 29th.

The committee approved SCR134, a resolution to place a question on the November ballot asking voters to amend the New Jersey Constitution. The terms “idiot or the insane” in Article II, Section I would be replaced with a “person who has been adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting.”

The committee also moved S2476, a bill that would change the state statute which contains similar language

People with developmental disabilities and mental illness already have the right to vote, guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the U.S. Voting Rights Act. The chief aim of the bill is to eliminate the stigmatizing language adopted in 1789.

The bills were introduced by Senator Richard Codey (D-



David Tag (R), a member of the NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities, testifying at the public hearing on behalf of the NJ Self-Advocacy Project. At left is NJ Public Advocate Ronald Chen.

Essex) at the urging of Monday Morning, the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities’ grassroots advocacy project. The legislation was drafted by Monday Morning in conjunction with the Department of the Public Advocate, the Office of Legislative Services and Sen. Codey’s office.

Advocates filled the small hearing room at the State House Annex to testify in support of the bills.

“These words do not belong in our constitution. As a person

with a disability, I find them offensive,” said David Tag, representing the NJ Self-Advocacy Project.

NJCDD’s Executive Director, Dr. Alison Lozano, testified that people with developmental disabilities and mental health concerns have long been stigmatized and discriminated against by such words.

“This antiquated language perpetuates the negative stereotypes and is harmful to those individuals who strive to be fully

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Anita Clavering testifying before the Senate Committee.

Senate committee moves bill to amend Constitution

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included in community life, which includes their civil right to vote," said Dr. Lozano.

Anita Clavering, facilitator of the Monday Morning Middlesex County Network, said the language, "not only perpetuates the cruel and debilitating problem of stigma for citizens with mental, behavioral, and emotional disabilities, it demeans citizens with learning and all disabilities who want to exercise their precious right to vote."

The legislation moves to the Senate floor for a vote. Com-

panion legislation is expected to be introduced in the General Assembly. If the amendment is passed by both legislative houses, it would be placed on the November statewide ballot.

For more information contact Monday Morning coordinator Luke Koppisch, 609.777.3293, or visit the NJCDD web site at www.njcdd.org/amendment.htm.

THE NATION

House files Joint Funding Resolution

A Joint Funding Resolution was filed earlier this month in the U.S. House of Representatives to fund federal programs and services for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2007. The resolution provides \$2.3 billion above the FY 2006 level and \$7 billion above the President's FY 2007 budget. This full year Continuing Resolution (CR) includes increases targeted mostly for important health and education programs. The CR includes:

- \$200 million for grants to States for special education to help school districts better serve almost seven million students with disabilities;
- \$250 million for Title I Education funding to help the federal

government fulfill its commitment to funding the No Child Left Behind Act;

- \$104 million for Head Start;
- \$52 million to the Centers for Medicare and Medicare Services to prevent the shutting down of the 1-800-MEDICARE call centers for the final remaining FY 2007 months;
- \$260 million to increase the maximum Pell Grant from \$4,050 to \$4,310;
- \$620 million for the National Institutes of Health;
- \$207 million for Community Health Centers;
- \$100 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to prepare for pandemic influenza and other emerging infectious diseases;
- \$76 million for the Ryan White CARE State Grant program;
- \$20 million for Meals on Wheels and other senior nutrition programs;
- \$1.4 billion for Section 8 Housing programs to renew 227,000 tenant-based and project-based housing vouchers;
- \$238 million for the Section 811 Supportive Housing program for people with disabilities (completely restoring proposed cuts included in the Administration's

NJCDD New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities

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NJCDD's Monday Morning is a compilation of news from various sources, organized to inform people with disabilities about policies, programs, laws, trainings and events. The purpose of the New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities is to apply its unique resources for culturally competent advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activity, to build leadership in self-advocates and their families, and to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families are full participants in the design of and have access to needed community services, individual supports, and other forms of assistance that support self-determination, independence, productivity, integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.

FY 2007 budget);

- \$300 million to help Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) make up shortfalls after last year's energy hikes created unexpected utility costs; and
- \$3.6 billion for veterans' health.

Financial Literacy

Research shows that low educational attainment, employment expectations and confusing governmental programs with conflicting eligibility criteria have resulted in many young people with disabilities not making successful transitions from school to postsecondary education, employment and independent living.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability (NCWD) web site provides "Financial Literacy Information for Young People with Disabilities," which explains various state and federal initiatives for individuals with disabilities and their families so that they can become more economically self-sufficient. The brief includes descriptions of financial literacy programs and additional resources.

For more information go to www.ncwd-youth.info/resources_&_Publications/information_Briefs/issue16.html

Mental health and substance abuse parity

The vast majority of Americans (89%), including Democrats, Republicans, managers and employees, want to end insurance discrimination against people with mental health needs

in this country, according to a new survey by Mental Health America (formerly known as the National Mental Health Association).

Representatives Patrick Kennedy (D-R.I.) and Jim Ramstad (R-Minn.) have begun a series of nationwide forums – sponsored by Mental Health America and The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – to move the nation closer to federal mental health insurance equity legislation after decades of advocacy.

"Our goal is to compile testimony from Americans across the country in an effort to pass the most responsible and comprehensive federal equity bill possible, said Congressman Kennedy."

A forum is scheduled for New Jersey on February 26 at the Statehouse in Trenton.

Summer Inclusion Conference, 2007

Making Every Day Count: Meeting the Needs of All Students in the General Education Classroom.

The New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education and Montgomery Township Public Schools will present the fifth annual comprehensive conference on inclusion, June 27-28, 2007, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at Montgomery Township High School, 1014 Route 601, Skillman, NJ 08858-2119.

The conference will feature a variety of workshops with useful strategies for general and special education teachers, administrators, parents, child study



team members and other individuals interested in implementing research-based educational practices.

The Conference also will feature a two-day strand on Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

Other topics will include classroom management, collaborative teaming, and strategies to support preschool inclusion. In addition, a workshop will be conducted on research-based classroom practices to teach academic content to students with autism spectrum disorders.

The Conference also will present a two-part workshop on Response to Intervention, a hands-on workshop on developing literacy for struggling readers in content area classes, workshops on parent-school collaboration, in-class consultation, speech therapists supporting literacy development in general education classrooms, and a principals' panel on hot topics in inclusive education.

Registration prior to June 1st is \$130 for one day and \$195 for both days. Prices after June 1st are \$155 for one day and \$225 for two days. Discounts are available to NJCIE members and school teams of two or more. For more information and a registration form, go to <http://njcie.net> (click workshops) or contact NJCIE at 732.613.0400. Five hours per day professional development credits or CEUs.

COMMUNITY CALENDER

March

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"Making the Move: Life After High School," Our House, 76 Floral Avenue, Murray Hill, NJ 07974
8 AM to 2:30 PM
www.ourhousenj.org

4-6

2007 Disability Policy Seminar: "New Congress, New Opportunities,"
Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington, DC
1.800.233.1234
To Register: www.aucd.org/meetings/gaseminar.cfm

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"Using Skinner's Analysis of Verbal Behavior to Analyze Language," The NJ Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community (COSAC),
8:30 AM to 3:30 PM
Crown Plaza in Monroe (NJ Turnpike, Exit 8A)
To Register www.njcosac.org

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Council on Developmental Disabilities Public Meeting
10 AM to 3 PM
Lafayette Yard Marriott Conference Center, 1 West Lafayette Street, Trenton, NJ
njddc@njddc.org

29-30

NJ APSE - The Network on Employment and The Boggs Center Woodbridge Hilton, Iselin, NJ
Registration Contact:
wendy.kuziemski@umdj.edu

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"Building Inclusive Communities," NJ Inclusive Child Care Project Annual Conference
Crown Plaza in Monroe (NJ Turnpike, Exit 8A)
Contact Denise Bouyer, 973.642.8100 ext. 108

Deadline to sign up for 2007 Partners in Policymaking: March 12th! Go to www.njddc.org

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