



### Mission

To use our collective power and legal mandate to develop and secure public policies that ensure civil rights and expand options for all people with disabilities in all aspects of life.



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# PA SILC Forum

## What is New at the PA SILC



2018 has started off as a busy year full of changes and new challenges for the Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council (PA SILC). The PA SILC has worked to stay in front of the political challenges in order to represent people with disabilities (PWD) needs here in Harrisburg. We have created this newsletter to let you know some of the more important projects we are working on. We have joined with advocates across the state to work on issues such as transportation and the roll out of managed care, while also seeking to improve the lives of underserved PWD in the community. We also recently formed the Statewide Action Group (SWAG) which connects advocates across Pennsylvania's Centers for Independent Living (CIL's), to bring positive changes for people with disabilities. (Top of page 2)

The PA SILC has also been working with the Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance to create a strong voice for effective and reliable local paratransit services across the state. (Bottom of page 2)

With the support of disability advocacy groups like the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Rehab Council, Disability Rights Pennsylvania and the National Council for Independent Living, the PA SILC pushed efforts to protect the Americans Disabilities Act from House resolution 620. (Page 3)

Last month, Governor Wolf sent a new budget proposal to the House and Senate. Within the budget proposal there were a number of funding concerns that the PA SILC plans to focus on as we approach 2019. (Page 4)

Thank you for taking the time to read about the programs we have been focusing on here in Harrisburg and across the state.

## State Wide Action Group!

Welcome to the SWAG update. Disability advocates from CIL's across the state are working together to build a better Pennsylvania. Along with transportation housing and employment, which seem to be a constant battle for people with disabilities, the SWAG team has a number of topics they have chosen to focus on. Inaccessible parking meters, barriers to sidewalk access, and the overall lack of accessible parking spaces affect PWD's statewide. The SWAG team also feels it is important to bring attention to the epidemic of sexual and physical abuse towards people with disabilities. Most importantly the SWAG recognizes the importance of the coming elections and is developing voting information and a voter registration drive for PWD's.

Making sure that we give time and attention to addressing these issues will require a great commitment and support from our community. If you would like to join in this effort and make Pennsylvania a better place for people with disabilities you can reach out to your local Center for independent living.

To find your local CIL contact the PA SILC at (717) 364-1732 or check our webpage at [www.pasilc.org](http://www.pasilc.org).



### **Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance Strikes Back**

The Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance is back again fighting for local transportation needs for PWD's. Recent changes by the state to non-medical transportation may impact individual services plan for people who live in the community. This has caused alarm within the disability community. Transportation is a key part of independence. If these changes take place and trips are reduced in service plans, it will be much harder to live freely in the community. Paratransit, taxi service, the shared ride program and other forms of mass transit are essential to access everyday things such as food stores, shopping malls, friends, and family. It is also a way to access local churches and other religious institutions. As prices rise for services, people on fixed incomes become increasingly trapped and can be forced to pick between paying bills and going out to buy food. That is why non-medical transportation is so important. As managed-care moves into long-term support with Community Health Choices, the Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance has been making sure that people who depend on the services are not forgotten. The Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance has been working with the Department of Health and Human Services to make sure that these changes are closely monitored and that people who use these services will continue to be able to have access to transportation services.

## The ADA Under Attack



House Resolution 620, the ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017, recently passed the U.S. House of Representatives. This moves the bill to the Senate and it makes it one step closer to being law. This bill changes the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make it more difficult to raise an ADA complaint. It requires people who file ADA lawsuits to wait six months after having a lawyer write a letter of complaint before any legal proceedings can commence. After these six months, the business or individual being sued has an additional 120 days to try to resolve the complaint before a lawsuit can be opened. HR 620 was drafted with the seeming intent to prevent frivolous lawsuits. However, it affects everyone; not just lawyers who are acting in bad faith. The Americans with Disabilities Act passed 27 years ago in 1990. Any law amending the ADA must be tempered by the fact that it's been used for creating a much more accessible world. With access being a civil right, it means that anybody can be a part of the community. A community that works, lives, and plays together. By passing HR 620 Congress stands in the way of people with disabilities. Please pay attention to this bill as it moves through Congress. Do not let your rights be taken away from you with this flawed legislation.

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On March 12, 1990, one thousand protesters led by Justin Dart came to DC to protest the delay of the American with Disabilities Act. They climbed the steps of the US Capitol, throwing themselves out of their wheelchairs and demanding their civil rights as Americans.

*Photo by Tom Olin*





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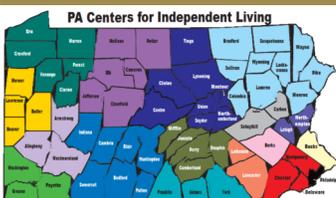
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## SILC

### Responsibilities

Collaborate with,  
strengthen and expand  
the network of Centers  
for Independent Living  
(CILs)  
Identify issues important  
to all individuals with  
disabilities which need to  
be addressed at the  
State and Federal Level  
Obtain input from all  
stakeholders and  
develop the State Plan  
for Independent Living  
(SPIL)  
Monitor and review the  
implementation of the  
SPIL



## 2018 Governor Wolf's Budget

On February 6 Governor Wolf introduced his proposed 2018 Pennsylvania Budget. His budget has been modestly called an election year budget, meaning there is relatively no new funding for many of the projects and programs for people with disabilities. The line item for Centers for Independent Living who receive state funds remains level funded this year. State-funded Centers for Independent Living have not seen any new funding since 2007. This point was brought up at the Senate Appropriations Committee hearing by Senator Tartaglione, but there were no new answers. Inside the Health and Human Services section of the budget, a lot of long-term care waivers and medical programs for home and community-based services saw small cuts that matched a large increase in the Pennsylvania Community Health Choices line item. This funding shift makes it harder to tell if there is any real change to the programs. Community Health Choices is the managed care system in Pennsylvania. As Community Health Choices continues to develop, there is a good chance that other similar line items in the budget will be absorbed by it. PA SILC along with many other disability advocacy groups need to make sure that the money tied to these programs does not disappear. This will be a challenge for disability advocates and the people they fight for.

### Hello. It is Nice to Meet You.

Hi, I am Daniel Kleinmann your local Public Policy and Outreach Coordinator. I am looking to share with you what we are working on here in the state capital. If you would like more information about any of these topics please call me at (717) 364-1732. Also we are working on a better name for this newsletter. Please help me come up with something less boring. I look forward to talking with you.

