

**Friends of WVSILC:**

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**THE IL EDGE**  
 SUMMER 2018 - WVSILC - PO Box 625 - Institute, WV 25112

# SILC UPDATE

As summer is winding down, the weather continues to bring a summer swelter. Kids are going back to school and politicians are attending all the fairs and community events, shaking hands, and asking for your vote. As you consider who to vote for, be sure to find out where the candidates stand on disability issues. Do they support disability rights? Do they support funding for Centers for Independent Living, Medicaid Waivers, and other programs that enable people with disabilities to stay in their own homes and communities?

The Omnibus appropriations bill passed by Congress in March included a \$12 million increase in funding for Independent Living (IL) for FFY 2018 – and for the first time since 1988, we will see some new money for CILs in West Virginia! This increase won't be enough to fund a new CIL but it does mean from now on, every time Congress increases CIL funding, West Virginia will benefit - a great reason to celebrate! And the House Appropriations Committee included an increase for IL for FFY 2019 as well – about \$8 million. Be sure to thank your Congressman and Senators for these increases and tell them how this funding makes a difference for you!

Take advantage of opportunities to participate in activities, get out in the community, and get to know policymakers and legislators. Visit with your legislators in their local offices and share your experiences and how policies and laws affect you. Get out there while the weather is good and be seen and heard! And when election day comes – VOTE!

From the desk of:

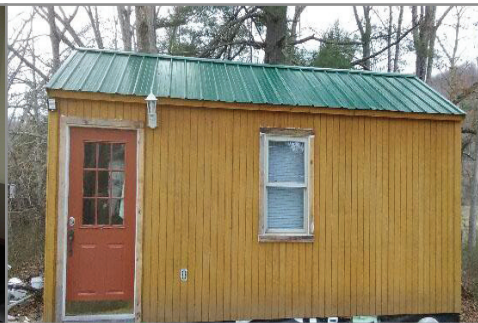
Ann McDaniel  
Executive Director

**MISSION**

*“To ensure persons who have disabilities have access to community-based resources that promote personal choice and facilitate the achievement of their independent living goals.”*



Kathi's 20 Year Anniversary p.2



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### WV Centers for Independent Living

**Appalachian CIL**  
 Elk Office Center  
 4710 Chimney Dr.  
 Charleston, WV 25302  
 1-800-642-3003

**Northern WV CIL**  
 601-603 East Brockway Ave.  
 Suite A & B  
 Morgantown, WV 26505  
 1-844-212-3464

109 Randolph Ave.  
 Elkins, WV 26241  
 304-636-0143

**Mountain State CIL**  
 821 Fourth Ave.  
 Huntington, WV 25701  
 1-866-687-8245

329 Prince St.  
 Beckley, WV 25801  
 304-255-0122

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# Celebrating 20 Years of Service

by Jerry Boyko


The June SILC meeting was emotionally filled with a celebration of Kathi's 20 years of dedicated service to Independent Living, along with somber good byes to board members who's terms had expired.

It was a major achievement pulling off a surprise 20-year anniversary party for the person that knows everything that happens concerning SILC. That in itself was a surprise to everyone who was involved in the most successful cover-up of the year.

Kathi was making plans to have lunch with council members and her significant other, but he was in on it too and we all just played along. She had no idea that she wasn't going anywhere for lunch. She began to ask questions when the caterer began preparing the food, because Kathi always schedules the caterer when we need one.

When it was time to tell her what was going on, she was so surprised. After everything settles down, many council members told funny stories of times they had with Kathi and of times when they had a problem and needed her help. She was always there and had the answers and resources to solve any problem thrown at her.

After celebrating Kathi's 20-year anniversary at WVSILC, we had to change gears and say goodbye to 3 members of the council because their terms of service had expired. Each one of them were presented a plaque in appreciation of their service to Independent Living. They will be eligible for nomination again after 1 year.

Enjoy the photos of this memorable SILC meeting. 



WVSILC Chairperson Beverley Jones presenting plaques of appreciation for their dedication to outgoing WVSILC members (from left to right) Jan Derry - CIL Directors Representative, Sandy Haberbosch, and Marion Steele - Vice Chair





# Advocate for Homeless Vets Asks Locals to Welcome Tiny Homes

By Jessica Farrish, Register-Herald



A member of the Beckley Human Rights Commission sees a national housing trend as a way to help local homeless veterans and others find housing, and she's working with Beckley Common Council to change municipal zoning ordinances to make housing more available to those who need it.

Human Rights Commissioner Kelly Elkins, who also serves as a community resource facilitator for Mountain State Centers for Independent Living, said that lifting ordinances that currently bar residents from having access to "little houses" will allow more people to own homes and participate in the community, as they join the "Tiny House Movement" that's sweeping across North America.

Elkins, who helps people become independent and to find housing as part of her job at the center, said she believes there is a homeless population in the area which needs addressed, including a number of returning, disabled veterans.

A disabled client's recent experience has led her to urge officials to tweak existing codes.

"I think we have a housing problem in Beckley for affordable and accessible housing," she said. "I would love to see more housing for those with disabilities, those who are on 'fixed incomes,' and the elderly community.

"Many of those are protected classes within the Human Rights Commission," Elkins reported, adding, "We struggle sometimes finding accessible housing for those with disabilities.

"There's a long waiting list."

The average cost of rent in Beckley is \$557 a month for a one-bedroom house or apartment, according to data at [www.bestplaces.net](http://www.bestplaces.net), a site that examines cost-of-living and other factors in a town.

Many rental homes aren't equipped for those with disabilities. Housing laws require disabled persons to pay up-front for any changes they make to a rental in order to accommodate a disability, and buying the average Beckley home




## Position Available Community Resource Advocate

Mountain State Centers for Independent Living is looking for a qualified person with a significant disability to serve as a Community Resource Advocate to assist people with disabilities work on a consumer chosen level of independence. Position available in Huntington office.

Responsibilities:

- teach independent living skills
- assist in finding proper housing, help with transitioning into the community
- provide job readiness training
- assist students who are transitioning from school to work and/or community living
- assist individuals with finding solutions to defer them from going into a nursing home
- provide individual and systems advocacy

MTSTCIL is an equal opportunity employer, but having a significant disability and being able to meet the essential functions of the job will carry additional weight. Please briefly describe your disability in your cover letter.

Send resumes to:  
Mountain State CIL  
Employment Services Division  
821 Fourth Avenue  
Huntington, WV 25701  
Email: [aoweeks@mtstcil.org](mailto:aoweeks@mtstcil.org) 





## Discounts, Health Care Resources, and Programs for People with Disabilities

Source: [Emily Helwig, Dealspot](#)



People with disabilities are a vibrant and vital part of our communities. According to the most recent US Census, there are 56.7 million people in the US living with disabilities, accounting for nearly one-fifth of the total population. That means it's incredibly likely that you or someone you know and love is currently living with a disability.

Unfortunately, living with a disability can make it difficult to find and keep work. In 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that people with disabilities had an unemployment rate of 10.5 percent, more than twice the rate of those people who do not have a disability.

Having a disability can also come with a hefty financial burden, especially if you require regular medical care, durable medical equipment, and/or a companion to help you navigate daily life.

Still, there are resources out there to help folks with disabilities cover their medical costs, supplement their income, and save money on everyday items. That's why we've put together this guide to help you find ways to keep get cash back and save on the things you need.

Here's what you'll get in this guide:

- A guide to navigating Social Security benefits
- Information on health insurance
- A list of ways to save on housing and upgrades to make your home more accessible
- Tips for saving on everyday items, travel, and entertainment
- A list of organizations that are helpful resources for people with disabilities

To see the full guide, click [here](#). 

## Little Lobbyists

Source: <https://littlelobbyists.org/>




Like all the best ideas, Little Lobbyists began as a kitchen table conversation between friends. Late one evening Elena Hung and Michelle Morrison, co-founders of Little Lobbyists, sat with a friend discussing their concerns for their community of kids with complex medical needs. The news from D.C. had everyone worried but not everyone had access to their representatives. If a legislator from far away wouldn't listen to their constituents, how could they know how important programs and protections like the ACA, Medicaid, ADA, and IDEA are for families reliant on specialized health care, accessible public spaces, and inclusive education?

A simple plan was formed: take photos and stories of kids with complex medical needs directly to their legislators. Deliver them in person with their own kids (and their trachs, ventilators, oxygen, wheelchairs, walkers, leg braces, feeding tubes, and more...) so lawmakers could see first-hand who needs the protection of the very laws and programs under threat.

After our first trip to Capitol Hill in June of 2017 it was clear we had so much more work to do. One trip turned into many. We've continued to collect stories from all over the country, visit legislators to educate them about kids with complex medical needs in their own states, and spread awareness about issues that impact our families. We've been joined by dozens more families in Washington D.C. who've made personal connections with policy makers. We've connected with thousands more through social media, television interviews, news articles, press conferences, and more. We've come a long way, learned an incredible amount, met inspiring allies, had countless conversations with adversaries, and fought some really big battles. And we're not done yet.

Our goal is for the United States to become a place where the government does not repeal, but rather advances and champions, policies and laws that protect the livelihood and future of our children. We hope one day soon all parties will come together to map a path to better health care, education, and community inclusion for every person with complex medical needs and disabilities.

We work every day toward that goal, to help guide our country toward the healthier, happier future our children deserve. 



# Three Candidates This Year Are Embracing the Disability Community— But Others Are Still Catching Up

Source: [Rewire News](#)

For far too long, the disability community has been overlooked as a voting bloc deserving of attention by candidates. Cynthia Nixon, Sara Bitter, and state Sen. Barbara L'Italien are all demonstrating how critical it is to change that.

In 2016, 62.7 million eligible voters—more than 25 percent of the total electorate—had a disability or had a household member with one. Nevertheless, candidates have historically overlooked that sizable voting power.

Some candidates, however, are starting to take notice—with potentially beneficial policy effects for people with disabilities.

One such candidate is Cynthia Nixon, a Democratic New York gubernatorial candidate, who was endorsed earlier this month by Disability Action for America, the first and only national political action committee dedicated to disability rights.

“Cynthia prioritizes making New York more accessible for people with disabilities,” said Colleen Flanagan, co-founder and executive director of Disability Action for America, in a statement. “Cynthia Nixon has been meeting with disability rights leaders from the very beginning of her campaign. The meetings have included meaningful discussion surrounding the solutions that will bring New Yorkers closer to disability justice.”

Nixon, who recently spoke about the importance of improving home health care at an event centered on disability advocacy, says she believes that it is time for candidates to finally engage the disability community as an important voting bloc.

“The disability rights community is not a singular constituency with singular needs and it’s time politicians stop excluding them from politics and policy decisions that directly impact them,” Nixon told Rewire.News in a statement.

Nixon has made issues facing people with disabilities part of her campaign platform. “They want what all of us want—access to a good education, affordable housing, transportation, and most importantly, the ability to control their own fates,” the statement continued. For example, she has an entire section outlining the need to make public transportation more accessible to people with disabilities in her subway plan.

“Disability rights is a civil rights issue that must be an absolute priority in New York and across the country,” Nixon said. “As we campaign to make New York a state that works for the many, not the few, we will continue to go directly to these communities all across the state to hear directly from them and make sure their voices are included.”

Nixon is not the only candidate to embrace the disability community. Sara Bitter, a Democrat who is running for Ohio State Senate District 7, has focused

## Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Source: [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)



The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution 61/106 of 13 December 2006. It came into force on 3 May 2008 upon the 20th ratification. Article 40 of the Convention stipulates that “The States Parties shall meet regularly in a Conference of States Parties in order to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the present Convention.” Since 2008, ten sessions of the Conference of States Parties have been held at United Nations Headquarters, New York.

The 11th session, per decided by States Parties at the 10th session of the Conference of States Parties on 15 June 2017, was scheduled to take place at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from 12 to 14 June 2018.

The session feature among other agenda items an election of 9 members of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For more information and to stream video on demand of the 11th session, [click here](#).





## Consumer of the Month



Teresa Wiles is an amazing lady who was born in 1962 with Spina Bifida. She is a very independent person and nothing gets in her way. She attended Upshur County Schools and graduated in 1982. This year she made a big decision to move to an apartment complex and live on her own.

Teresa has many volunteer hours in Upshur County. She was a candy striper with over 1400 plus hours, a dispatcher for the EMS, Auxiliary volunteer at St. Joseph's Hospital, Relay for Life, and joined the CEO Community Education Outreach Club. Her CEO Club has done many fund raisers such as Charity Work, Breast Cancer Awareness, Pet Rescue and helped fill totes for the Child Advocacy Center.

Teresa pushed herself in two different events for the March of Dimes Walkathon. In 1982 Teresa made her hometown proud as she was a Honorary Hostess Princess for the Strawberry Festival.

She is currently in a Peer Support Group at her apartment complex with NWVCIL. She goes to a local church and attends a Sisters Study, while being in Friends of Upshur County Library.

Teresa is blessed to be in a loving family and traveled to many places growing up. She has been to every state except Hawaii.

Her favorite thing to do now is crocheting. She learned to crochet over 24 years ago and has crocheted approximately 200 afghans! She donates them to place like, the Senior Center and to a local nursing home for Bingo prizes.

She will be donating a Blue and Gold WVU afghan to our NWVCIL Annual Event in October.

Teresa is one busy and happy lady. She has many friends on Facebook and in her apartment building.

Teresa..... YOU ROCK! 

## NCIL's 2018 Annual Conference on Independent Living Mobilize: Resistance through Action

### A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Advocates and Friends,



NCIL's 2018 Annual Conference theme is "Mobilize: Resistance through Action." For over a year now, members of Congress and aggressive ideologues have tried their hardest to strip people with disabilities of their health and liberty. We have met these challenges head-on and will continue to do so.

Some battles have been won, others lost. We are powerful, and we must share resources, strategize, and train new advocates if we want to succeed in our efforts to protect our programs and secure the independence of people with disabilities.

In 2018, NCIL will focus heavily on mobilization and advocacy. This has always been the core of our work, but we must challenge ourselves to stay focused, strategic, and proactive. We cannot make progress without you. We need you to join us in Washington to show our power, take to the streets, and share our message of independence and empowerment.

NCIL's Annual Conference is the largest Independent Living event of the year. NCIL regularly hosts over 1,000 people, including grassroots advocates, CIL and SILC leadership, members of Congress, government officials, and representatives from other major organizations that work for justice and equity for people with disabilities.

Kelly Buckland, Executive Director  
National Council on Independent Living

### Introduction and Evaluations

NCIL's 2018 Annual Conference on Independent Living was an amazing experience. Over 1,011 people joined us from all over the US, as well as a large contingent from Japan. We want to thank each and every one of you who devoted the time, money, and energy to join us in Washington! Your participation makes the NCIL Conference what it is – the world's largest Independent Living event and a force to be reckoned with.

NCIL is always a special event – unlike any other conference – but this year's conference was especially unique. This year's theme, Mobilize: Resistance through Action, was more than just a catchy title. From day one, we focused on preparing NCIL's members to take action at the conference and back home. NCIL's pre-conference sessions, Resistance through Direct Action: How IL and ADAPT Work Together and Integrating Disability Into Emergency Management: A Blueprint to Saving Lives in the Community, were action-oriented and very well presented. The opening plenary featured a rousing speech from Rebecca Vallas from Center for American Progress, who shared her vision for collaboration and action from all oppressed people, to demand their civil and human rights.





## “The Importance of Self-Care”


Self care is of utmost importance to the human race no matter who you are. Finding a healthy balance between long work hours and a fast paced home life can prove to be overwhelming; we all need a moment to enjoy some stress free “me” time. Many forms of self care exist, and there is no wrong way to relax and provide yourself with that much needed brief escape from reality. I chose to touch on the few ways I love to unwind after an extremely hectic week; especially for those who travel a lot, I thought this piece would serve as something resourceful.

1. Bath Bombs – Bath bombs are a relatively new, but popular trend that has made an appearance during the past few years. I love bath bombs; they have become a personal top favorite method. In my world, I crave solitude as I natural introvert and I have found that the best way to achieve that is by soaking in a hot tub full of bubbles and a bath bomb full of aromatic pleasure.
2. Exercise – I love my treadmill, and believe it or not, exercise does in fact serve a positive purpose in terms of relaxation; physical activity exhausts the mind and calms you by releasing endorphins that are needed to maintain optimal mental health functionality. As someone who deals with depression and anxiety issues, walking on my treadmill while jamming out to some great music has for a fact benefited me both mentally and physically. I haven’t gotten to use it as much lately, and I can tell a huge difference in how I feel; the bottom line is, everyone needs exercise.
3. A Creative Outlet – An outlet of creative expression of some sort is crucial for everyone; we all need a way to express ourselves: our thoughts, feelings, desires, and opinions. The freedom of expression is especially vital for decompressing after a long day or week. One outlet for myself that I know I have not spent enough of my time and energy on recently is writing. Writing is truly my therapy. I have tried going to psychologists in the past, and nothing has worked better than these three things: solitude , a good sized notebook, and my pen. Everyone is different; some meditate, some find joy in playing an instrument, and others read (one relaxation outlet I also love!). There is no correct way to express yourself. Find your outlet and live your truth. Be who you are. The world needs expression and individuality. If you choose to see a psychologist and it works for you, then that’s wonderful; I just never saw the point and therefore it never worked for me; to each their own. You have to commit to anything that’s done in life for it to take full effect. What truly saved my life was my creative outlet in addition to medication; I get so much joy from sharing my life with the world through the written word.
4. Proper Nutrition – I’m from West Virginia, which means that I eat A LOT of country cooking. Everyone needs food sources from all of the food groups to survive; we eat a lot of meat, potatoes, beans, and local vegetables and fruits. Pan fried green tomatoes are a common food item here in the summer, and honestly there is nothing better than

*(Self-Care continued from previous column)*

a fresh home grown tomato. My all time favorite snack is what you ask? West Virginia’s pepperoni rolls. Yum! I am also guilty of having a killer sweet tooth! Of course, eat fun foods in moderation and be sure to get a well balanced diet. I love fruit and oatmeal as my go to healthy breakfast. One cannot survive on junk food, hamburgers, and processed chicken nuggets. Eat healthy, but be sure to enjoy fun foods of your choice every now and then!

5. Know Your Limitations – Most importantly, realize your limitations, accept them, and listen to your body when it tells you to slow down. I write these words as a hypocrite, as I so often ignore the signals my body gives me. I over do life and as a result, I pay dearly for it. Don’t shy away from utilizing the word “no”. Recovery time afterwards is so much more difficult when you have more drive and ambition than you have common sense. Work until your body says “Hey, I need a break”. Take a thirty minute nap or relax in that time and then get back to whatever task you were doing. Don’t keep moving until you are thoroughly exhausted or what you’re doing causes you to become ill. Take all medications you need no matter what time it is or what time zone you’re in. Take care of you.

Remember, self care is a necessity! The listed activities above are unique to my life, and to my circumstances, but I hope they help someone. I think the most I learned from writing this is that the word “no” is one of power; for it is one word that can offset preventable health consequences. Live your truth, know who you are and what you’re capable of, and lastly, take care of you. 

~written by [Molly Spence](#)



*(See Self-Care next column)*



Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living



## Tucker County Homecoming Day Parade



John Kahl and April Fitzwater of Parsons WV created a float for their local Celebrate Recovery, held at the Church of God. April and John have been proud members of the Elkins CIL for over 3 years. They participate in many social gathering

held with the CIL. These too pulled out a first place trophy at the homecoming parade for best float. Go April and John! Cant wait to see what happens in 2019 for the pair of hard workers.

## Elkins Peer Support Group



Elkins Peer Support Group paired with Axis Training for a Zumba Fitness class help at Valley Village Apartments. 8 attendees Joined instructor Kayla Carr for an hour long session.

Pictured are Kayla the Instructor and Debbie Copeman, a member of the Elkins Peer Support Group.

## Hooked on Fishing Not On Drugs



NWVCIL paired with Elkins High School for the Annual Hooked on Fishing Not Drugs event, to bring awareness to the drug epidemic in WV. This event informed children of alternatives to drugs. NWVCIL had a booth with consumer Donna Horneck in which the children played corn hole with Hornbeck and received informational packets about the CIL.



## MTSTCIL Celebrates 30 Years of Service

On June 9th, 2018, Mountain State Centers for Independent Living in Beckley, celebrated 30 years of service in Beckley. There were several speakers, entertainment and delicious food from Pasquale's.



There were people from our past and present. Kelly Elkins was so excited about what she had to tell us about the present, that she dressed up like a present!

Mayor Rappold of Beckley was our first speaker and welcomed everyone with a proclamation for Mountain State Centers for Independence Day in Beckley.

Randy Gilkey played piano and entertained us as we ate a delicious dinner from Pasquale's. Desserts were made by staff and enjoyed by all.

Ernie Parsons (Capt. Ernest W. Parsons, Jr.), once a Mountain State Centers for

Kelly Elkins of MTSTCIL

Independent Living staff member, is Beckley's Fire Marshal. He spoke to us about our past.

Anne Weeks, President/CEO spoke to us about our future.

Alicia Kinder, coach for the Raleigh County Special Olympics bocce team spoke to us about her motto of being the best we can be. She shared what it means to be a coach, to see everyone's potential, and working hard to achieve goals and teamwork.

Funds raised at the 30 year celebration will go toward the cost of a ramp for Theresa. She is a 27-year-old woman living with her husband. On May 10, 2014, Theresa was a newlywed on her first outing driving an ATV. She was involved in an accident that left her a paraplegic. Since her accident, Theresa has needed to use a wheelchair. She is asking for a vehicle ramp to be able to get into and out of her van. Theresa has been on the waiting list since June 4, 2014. Having a ramp to be able to enter her van while in her wheelchair would provide her with the independence to be able to get into her van on her own, and not need to wait until someone who could carry her to lift her in and out of the van.

To make a donation visit: <https://support.mtstcil.org/give/125209/#!/donation/checkout>





*(Tiny House continued from p3)*

— around \$89,500, according to Forbes magazine — is virtually impossible for someone who is living in a homeless shelter or group home.

“One of Mountain State’s core services is housing,” Elkins explained. “We want our consumers, and those with disabilities, to live as independently as they can, in their own homes and communities.

“Our veterans are coming back from serving in the military, and they’re coming back with disabilities, and they need something accessible.”

A solution is the “Tiny Home,” which is between 100 and 400 square feet and costs \$10,000 to \$15,000 in Raleigh County, on average.

The economically-designed houses are custom-built and can easily feature a “universal design” with wider doorways and a ramp for disabled citizens. Several can be built or placed on a shared courtyard.

Elkins said she was familiar with the “Tiny House” movement — a trend in North America to build and live in one-level homes that are 400 square feet or so —from watching TV shows.

Her client at Mountain State, however, brought it to the forefront recently when he built his own tiny home.

The consumer, a disabled veteran, purchased an outbuilding in city limits, establishing it on a permanent foundation. Using his carpentry skills, he set out to turn the shed into a real home.

He added a fold-down table, a built-in shelf and bed, wooden kitchen floors and tile in the living area. He added a small fridge and little hot water tank.

Due to existing ordinances, he is unable to get utility services to the house.

Currently, the City of Beckley requires a minimum of around 400 square feet of living space, with additional guidelines for kitchen, living space, bathroom and kitchen passageway, Beckley Planning Officer Bob Cannon said Thursday.

Cannon added that city code also requires 74 feet of frontage, or boundary between a building and road, along with 10,000 square feet of area on a residential lot.

“If you put a 400-square foot house in the middle of that, you’ve got a bunch of wasted space,” Cannon said.

He added that city zoning regulations wouldn’t allow a colony of “little houses” on the same lot.

In the county, a single family dwelling must be at least 750 square feet to be awarded a building permit, qualifying it for utilities services, Raleigh Zoning and Planning Officer Billy Michael said Wednesday.

Elkins and the client appeared at a recent Beckley Common Council meeting to ask Council for direction on changing current ordinances.

“The client wants to be involved in his community,” she explained June 1. “He wants to take on more of a leadership role.

*(Tiny House continued from pprevious column)*

“In order to do that, to be part of any board, committee, council or commission with the City of Beckley, you have to be a resident within city limits.

“I would like to see someone to be able to purchase their own land and their property and either build this home or have the homes brought to them or shipped in,” she added. “Where we’re trying to find housing for the disabled population, sometimes at apartment complexes, you have to meet a certain age requirement.

“This would open it up for young people, just like (her client), to have their own housing at an affordable cost and something they can call their own.”

Beckley Mayor Rob Rappold, who was among 12 regional leaders to lead the nation in reducing veteran homelessness in 2017 in partnership with Beckley Veterans’ Administration Medical Center, said a community of tiny homes could further reduce regional homelessness.

“It would please me to see a community of small houses surrounding a large garden or small farm, where people are given the opportunity to grow some of their own food, and people are given the opportunity to increase their feeling of self worth,” he said. “I don’t know if, necessarily, that’s something that would be practical in the downtown district, but I think there are areas, if not right in city limits, then adjacent to the city limits, where something like that could be possible.

“There’s a chance there could be some federal funding for that sort of thing.”

Elkins, who in April pitched the “tiny home” idea to the Human Rights Commission during a Fair Housing workshop, said she will be presenting her request to Cannon this month.





## Healthy Recipe


*Caprese Zoodles with fresh garden vegetables, now widely available, take advantage of them to eat healthier.*



### Ingredients:

- 4 large zucchini
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 2 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 c. mozzarella balls, quartered if large
- 1/4 c. fresh basil leaves
- 2 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

### Directions:

1. Using a spiralizer, create zoodles out of zucchini.
2. Add zoodles to a large bowl, toss with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Let marinate 15 minutes.
3. Add tomatoes, mozzarella and basil to zoodles and toss until combined.
4. Drizzle with balsamic and serve. 



*(Candidates continued from p5)*

much of her campaign on people with disabilities. Bitter, who is an attorney, a disability rights advocate, and a mother of two children with disabilities, told Rewire News, “I am running for office to create a Disability, Mental Health and Addiction Caucus in the Ohio legislature, so that I can make sure that all voices and perspectives are represented when lawmakers get together in Columbus.”

By and large, Bitter said, “people with disabilities do not have lobbyists. This often means that their voices, and the voices of their families, are left out of the conversation entirely ... I want to make sure that someone represents them when the legislature makes decisions,” she continued.

In addition to making disability rights a priority of her campaign platform, members of the disability community are an integral part of Bitter’s campaign team: “A significant number of people on my campaign team have a loved one who experiences a disability or mental health condition, have a disability or mental health condition or are working professionally in a disability or mental health related field. Some of the people working with me fit into several of these categories.”

Similarly, state Sen. Barbara L’Italien, a Democrat who is running for Massachusetts’ 3rd Congressional District seat, has a personal connection to the disability community. “When my oldest of four kids, Rudy, was diagnosed with autism, it became clear to me and my husband that we did not have educational, health care, or safety net systems set up for kids like him or their families. Health insurance wouldn’t cover the basic necessities that kids with autism need (like communication tools for non-verbal kids). I knew families who were second-mortgaging their homes to afford those basics that their kids needed,” L’Italien told Rewire News via email.

For more than a decade, L’Italien has served as a Massachusetts state legislator, where she has been a strong advocate for people with disabilities, including strengthening special education and starting the Asperger’s Association of New England. “I plan to take this work to Congress, and fight for a better and more comprehensive system for all people with intellectual disabilities,” she continued.

L’Italien has also made incorporating the disability community in her campaign a priority. “I’ve involved this community in every one of my campaigns because it is my community. Through my leadership on this issue I have made many friends and met many families like mine just as empowered to make a difference for their kids. I’m proud to count dozens of people with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities among my volunteers. Even so, I make a point to hire people with disabilities and develop their skills. I make sure that the disability community is always included among the groups and constituencies we talk to on campaign website and promotional materials. I help organize this community to fight for what they need and vote for leaders who will help get it done.”

From holding campaign events for disability advocates, to ensuring that campaign staff include members of the disability community, to including disability rights as platform issues, Nixon, Bitter, and L’Italien have demonstrated the importance of candidates including the disability community in their campaigns. All three have also made pushing for policies that would benefit vulnerable people part of their campaigns, such as health-care expansion or public school funding.

Nevertheless, there is still work to be done across the board—as evidenced by





*(Candidates continued from p10)*

the low voter turnout among people with disabilities.

During the 2016 election, the voter turnout for people with disabilities was six percentage points lower than that of nondisabled people. Indeed, people with disabilities contend with numerous barriers to engaging in the voting process.

Notably, people with disabilities experienced unprecedented attention during the 2016 election. An August 2016 Bloomberg poll revealed that voters found Trump's mocking of a disabled reporter to be his most offensive action. Meanwhile, Hillary Clinton received notice for her campaign's significant focus on people with disabilities, including a rally centered on disability issues, a comprehensive disability rights platform, and the inclusion of people with disabilities as prominent speakers during the Democratic National Convention. Although disability advocates had concerns about Clinton's lack of an intersectional approach to disability, many were thankful that a campaign was finally focusing on the disability voting bloc.

Still, according to researchers at Rutgers University, 18 percent of registered voters with disabilities did not vote—and for nearly 21 percent of that group, the reason was that they did not like the candidates or campaign issues during the 2016 election.

While there are likely many reasons for this dissatisfaction, one important one is likely the inaccessibility of campaign events and offices. To be accessible for people with disabilities, candidates must ensure that their events are fully accessible, such as providing wheelchair access, sign language interpreters, and guides for blind people. Likewise, campaign offices should be accessible so that voters can visit and volunteer.

According to the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), "Campaigns must connect with their communities and learn about their interests so that they can understand their voters' needs. If a campaign isn't accessible, they aren't able to connect with their community fully, and many prospective voters with disabilities can experience barriers to learning about or participating in a campaign."

"Furthermore, campaigns are often powered by volunteers, and if they aren't accessible, they're both cutting off essential help and creating barriers to civic participation for people with disabilities who wish to be involved in the political process. It is up to campaigns to make sure that their information and events are accessible to voters with disabilities, and that they are reaching out to the disability community to actively include them," the NCIL continued.

To assist political campaigns with engaging with the disability community and ensuring that they are fully accessible, NCIL has developed a free resource guide: "Including People with Disabilities in Your Political Campaign: A Guide for Campaign Staff."

The lack of accessibility at polling places is also a likely source of low voter turnout among people with disabilities. During the 2016 election, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) examined accessibility at 178 polling places. Notably, 60 percent (107) of the polling places had one or more potential impediments, such as steep ramps, lack of signs indicating accessible paths, and inadequate parking. Of the 137 polling places where the GAO was able to completely survey voting stations inside the polling place, nearly two-thirds had a voting station with a purportedly accessible voting system that still had accessibility barriers. For example, some voting stations


*(Candidates continued from previous column)*

could not accommodate wheelchairs, thereby limiting some people from being able to cast a private and independent vote.

As candidates engage in get out the vote activities and push for voting rights, it is important that politicians include voting access for the disability community in their efforts.

As such, it would behoove candidates running for office to engage this community by including people with disabilities as members of campaign teams as well as ensuring all events are fully accessible. Likewise, candidates must include disability issues in their platforms while also remembering that all issues affect the disability community. Finally, as candidates push their get out the vote efforts, it's important to ensure that people with disabilities have access to polling places.

For far too long, the disability community has been overlooked as a voting bloc deserving of attention by candidates. Ignoring the needs of people with disabilities has significant consequences. Indeed, disability rights are currently under attack, likely in part because of the lack of disability awareness by politicians. Moreover, because disability transcends all identities—including gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and political affiliation—all issues affect people with disabilities and having politicians who understand a range of needs and experiences benefits everyone.

Undoubtedly, people with disabilities and their loved ones remain a massive and largely untapped voting bloc. But as Nixon, Bitter, and L'Italien demonstrate, it is not only easy to include the disability community in campaigns—it is critical to do so. 



*(See Candidates next column)*



## NCIL's 2018 Annual Conference



*(NCIL continued from p6)*

NCIL's 2018 March, Rally, and Day on the Hill, was as lively as ever. The incessant rain didn't deter hundreds of people with disabilities from marching in the streets and taking their concerns to Congress. Speaking of Congress, we had such a huge turnout at our rally that we had Members of Congress lined up behind the stage to address NCIL members. See below for the details on this year's Rally – it was one for the books.

We're proud to announce that we had another huge group of Youth Scholars and young adults participate in this year's conference. We want to thank all of our Youth Scholars, young participants, and youth scholarship sponsors for investing in NCIL and young advocates. This work has changed the face of NCIL and we have to make sure that it continues.

We were also so excited to have the Laura Flanders show with us this year. The Laura Flanders Show is a popular internet television show focused on social activists, artists, entrepreneurs and other innovative individuals that refuse to wait to make change in the world. "Since 2008, The Laura Flanders Show has reached 3.1 million viewers on YouTube (over 150,000 people every month). The program is syndicated in the US on KCET/LINKtv and Free Speech TV for a combined reach of some 74 million homes, and internationally, in English and Spanish on the pan-Latin American network teleSUR, reaching an additional 180 million homes around the world." – from [www.lauraflanders.org](http://www.lauraflanders.org). Laura Flanders was on hand to document the NCIL Conference and interview everyone from NCIL leaders to first time attendees to gather their input on NCIL and the Independent Living Movement. The Laura Flanders show on the NCIL Conference will be available this fall. Stay tuned to NCIL for further details on its release.

There are so many more highlights and details of the conference in the wrap-up. We hope you'll take the time to read it and look through the photos. If you attended the conference, please take a few moments to [tell us about your experience](#).

### Photos Now Available!

We are very happy to announce that all 1,847 pictures from NCIL's 2018 Annual Conference on Independent Living are now available on Flickr. We apologize that we do not have the capacity or knowledge to caption every picture. If you see a picture of yourself or others you know, please caption it for the benefit of all. This year, we've created an album of select (captioned) photos that capture the overall feel of the 2018 Annual Conference. If you would like a specific photo added to this collection, please caption the photo in the comments or email [eleanor@ncil.org](mailto:eleanor@ncil.org) with the link and a description. You can comment on photos using a Flickr / Yahoo account. Special thanks to Michael Clegg for his amazing photos and, as always, thanks to our members, who made these photographs what they are: the story of our people gathering in our nation's Capital to bring about equality and freedom for people with disabilities!

[View the 2018 Selected Photo Album](#)

[View all the photos](#)

### NCIL March, Rally, and Hill Visits

Yet again, this year's March and Rally was one of the biggest we've ever seen! Well over 1,000 NCIL members from across the country along with local disability rights advocates marched through the streets of DC making noise, holding signs, and creating a disturbance in the streets in the name of disability





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rights! The [MCI D45 CRT LE Commuter Coach](#) served as the “chase vehicle” for the March and offered assistance to anyone needing it as we made our way to the Capitol.

After arriving at the US Capitol, Rally participants listened to remarks from over a dozen Members of Congress, including:

- Senator Bob Casey (PA)
- Senator Tammy Duckworth (IL)
- Representative Gene Green (TX)
- Senator Maggie Hassan (NH)
- Representative Joe Kennedy (MA)
- Representative Jim Langevin (RI)
- House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (CA)
- Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (NY)
- Representative Darren Soto (FL)
- Representative Dina Titus (NV)
- Senator Chris Van Hollen (MD)
- Representative Juan Vargas (CA)
- Representative Debbie Wasserman Schulz (FL)

Our Rally speakers talked about many of the issues that are important to our community, including protecting Medicaid, preserving access to healthcare, employment rights, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and of course community integration and the Disability Integration Act. Members took the mic and pledged their support for disability rights and the Independent Living community – and three Members even pledged to cosponsor the Disability Integration Act on the stage!

The Independent Living community is facing a lot of threats right now, and the March and Rally was a meaningful opportunity for us to have our voices heard and listen to Members of Congress who want to have our backs. This year’s event was incredibly successful, and it reinforced how strong (and loud) we are together!

Immediately after the Rally, NCIL members stormed the Hill to meet with their elected officials and talk about the key issues we’re fighting for. NCIL members secured even more commitments from new DIA cosponsors, and talked about other key priority issues important to their Members’ disabled constituents and the entire IL community.

The March and Rally and Hill Visits are an exciting and important part of the Annual NCIL Conference, and this year was as successful as ever! Thank you to everyone who made this day a powerful and effective event!

## Legislative & Advocacy Updates

### **NCIL and ADAPT vs. ACCSES**

What better way to learn the skills of mobilizing and resistance than staging a direct action protest?

Wednesday morning, a group of approximately 50 advocates left the conference for the Capitol, where ACCSES was holding a briefing on H.R. 5658, the “Workplace Choice and Flexibility for Individuals with Disabilities Act”. ACCSES is an association of sheltered workshops – businesses that make money by segregating and often paying subminimum wages to employees

(See NCIL p14)

## NCIL’s 2018 Annual Conference





## NCIL's 2018 Annual Conference



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with disabilities. **H.R. 5658 is not about choice, nor flexibility.** Instead, it would lead to more limited options and more segregation by redefining competitive, integrated employment to include segregated settings. This bill would allow sheltered workshops to continue to keep disabled people in isolated, segregated settings, working for mere pennies while they profit off of our labor – all at taxpayer expense.

We will not stand for this! Advocates disrupted the hearing with chants of “Segregation is not community integration!” We demanded real, competitive, integrated employment. Twenty four people were arrested as the Congressional briefing was completely shut down.

### ***Disability Integration Act (DIA)***

Last year, our community rallied around preventing cuts to Medicaid and protecting the Affordable Care Act (ACA). This year, advancing the Disability Integration Act was a major rallying point, and did we ever rally! We started the week off right.

This year’s theme, Mobilize: Resistance through Action, created a perfect opportunity for NCIL to highlight a new grant project: the [National Organizing Project](#) (NOP), a collaboration between NCIL and ADAPT funded by the Ford Foundation. The NOP aims to advance direct action in support of disability rights and community living. An entire half of our afternoon pre-conference was dedicated to “Resistance through Direct Action – How IL and ADAPT Work Together”. The session filled the room with folks who were fired up and ready to take further action in support of both organizations and our partnership.

After our pre-conference session on how CILs can support ADAPT in direct action, we learned about “Organizing and Action to Advance the Disability Integration Act”. We had another packed room with eager participation from the audience.

Next up was our 1,000+ person March and Rally at the Capitol on Tuesday, where 3 of our Congressional speakers – with some prodding from advocates – announced their cosponsorship of the DIA from the podium! Another legislator pledged to get as many others to sign on as she could.

Fired up from these successes, advocates secured pledges of cosponsorship all afternoon as they visited their legislators. One visit brilliantly exemplified our theme of Mobilize: Resistance through Action as two ADAPTs secured another cosponsor by refusing to leave before the Senator signed on – which happened very quickly!

### ***DIA Art and Essay Contests***

NCIL was thrilled to have the winners of our DIA Art and Essay Contests join us for parts of this year’s conference. The winning writers, Daniel Anderson and Sam Anderson, and the winning artists, Bridget Gabriel and Eli-Robles-Cranston, each received awards during the Annual Awards Luncheon for submitting entries that captured the spirit of community integration and thoughtfully described how the DIA will improve the lives of millions of people with disabilities throughout the US. We were honored to have such passionate young people at the conference to meet with other IL advocates and to talk about how important the DIA is for young disabled advocates all around the country! Additionally, all of the artwork submitted to NCIL was turned into wearable buttons that people wore proudly throughout the conference.





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### **Centene Endorses the DIA**

An exciting surprise came Monday morning when the Centene Corporation announced that they formally support the Disability Integration Act, officially becoming the first health insurance company to do so! To wall-shaking applause and chants of “free our people” and “DIA today”, Centene joined forces with their disabled stakeholders to ensure that we can live without fear of unnecessary institutionalization. Kudos to the many advocates within Centene Corp, ADAPT, and NCIL who worked hard to make this a reality, thereby also making our right to freedom that much closer to being realized!

### **Annual Council Meeting**

NCIL’s primary business at our 2018 Annual Council Meeting was to elect new members to the Governing Board. The agenda for this year included elections for the following positions: Vice-President, Secretary, Diversity Chairperson, and three new Members at-Large.

- Sarah Launderville was re-elected as Vice-President. Sarah is the Executive Director of the Vermont Center for Independent Living in Montpelier, Vermont, as well as Co-Chair of NCIL’s Women’s Caucus.
- Lou Ann Kibbee was re-elected as Secretary. Lou Ann, a NCIL Past-President, is the Independent Living Program Manager for SKIL in Hays, Kansas.
- Jessica Jimenez was elected as Diversity Chairperson. Jessica is Co-Chair of NCIL’s Women’s Caucus, as well as the Systems Change Advocate at the Disability Community Resource Center in Los Angeles, California.

There were three new Members at-Large positions available. These are the new Members at-Large:

- Brian Peters (re-elected) is Co-Chair of NCIL’s Housing Subcommittee, as well as the Community Access & Policy Specialist with IndependenceFirst, the Center for Independent Living in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Kim Gibson (elected) is the Executive Director of disABILITY Link, the Center for Independent Living of metro Atlanta.
- Doug Toelle (re-elected) is the Advocacy Director of Access Alaska in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The Youth at-Large member is elected ahead of the conference by NCIL’s youth members and the results were announced at the Annual Meeting. Eiryn Griest-Schwartzman, a student and advocate from Columbia, Maryland, was elected to serve as the Youth at-Large member.

Regional Representatives rotate elections every other year, with even-numbered regions elected in even-numbered years and odd-numbered regions elected in odd-numbered years. Elections for the Regional Representatives in even-numbered regions were held prior to the conference and announced at the Annual Council Meeting:

- Region 2 Representative: Chad W. Underwood (re-elected)
- Region 4 Representative: Kent Crenshaw (re-elected). Kent is the Executive Director of Disability Rights & Resources in Montgomery, Alabama.

(NCIL continued from previous column)

- Region 6 Representative: Julie Espinoza (re-elected). Julie is the IL Skills Specialist at REACH of Plano in Plano, Texas.
- Region 8 Representative: Candie Dalton (re-elected). Candie is Executive Director of Atlantis Community in Denver, Colorado.
- Region 10 Representative: Kimberly Meck (re-elected). Kimberly is the Executive Director of the Alliance of People with Disabilities in Seattle, Washington.

Congratulations to all of our new and returning Governing Board members!



(See NCIL next column)

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

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## **SILC Meeting Schedule:**

October 3, 2018  
December 5, 2018

### **Location:**

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Division of Rehabilitation Services  
10 McJunkin Drive  
Nitro, WV

## **13th Annual Elder Abuse Conference:**

September 14, 2018  
Raleigh County Senior Center  
1614 S Kanawha St  
Beckley, WV 25801

For more information call 304-255-1397



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