



DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW MEXICO

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Promoting and Protecting the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

DISABILITY ISSUES IN THE 2013 LEGISLATURE STATUS REPORT #8

By Jim Jackson, Executive Director
DISABILITY RIGHTS NEW MEXICO
March 11, 2013

Down to the wire. This year's legislative session ends at noon this Saturday, March 16th. There will be long nights of committee hearings and lengthy floor sessions as the two chambers address hundreds of proposals that are still in play, but most of these bills will fall by the wayside as they are tabled in committee or just fail to get all the way through the process before the end of the session.

Senate Finance tweaks state budget. On Saturday, the Senate Finance Committee met just long enough to officially adopt about 150 amendments to the House version of HB 2, the state budget bill. Most of the changes were minor adjustments and wording changes. The committee added only about \$6.4 million for on-going programs, a drop in the bucket (1/10th of one percent) in a budget of \$5.9 billion. Early reading programs in the public schools received an additional \$4 million, offset by cuts of the same amount in other public school funding, including \$2 million cut from the extra funding set aside to meet the federally required "maintenance of effort" for special education funding in the coming fiscal year.

Civil legal services received an additional \$150,000. State funding for Medicaid was reduced about \$2 million in anticipation of further savings from Centennial Care and from Medicaid expansion. There were no changes to the amount of funding provided for DD or other disability-related state agencies.

The budget bill will be presented to the Senate for action early this week; once adopted there, it will be returned to the House to see if they will agree to the Senate changes.

One done, many other disability bills still moving through the process. HB 155, imposing a \$5 fee for accessible parking placards, just passed the Legislature this weekend and will now be considered by the governor. SB 458, calling for a roll-back of the changes being made to the DD waiver program, is at the final stage of the legislative process, awaiting a final vote in the House, as is SB 171, to establish a legislative committee focused on disability issues. HB 22, requiring that the children of public employees have the same insurance coverage for autism services as individuals and employees of private companies, has one last committee (SCORC) to move through before heading to the full Senate for a vote. HB 249, calling for a 5-year plan to address the wait list for the DD waiver program, also has one last committee (SFC) in order to be heard on the Senate floor. SM 20, a memorial calling for a similar plan for the DD waiting list, is already waiting for final action by the Senate. SB 320,

aligning the state Service Animal Act with current provisions of the ADA, has one last House committee hearing (HJC) before final action can be taken by the House.

Some other disability bills have already stopped moving or are unlikely to make it through the session. SB 112, extending limited guardianship authority for up to six months after the death of a protected person, has been tabled in SJC. SB 528, addressing school discipline policies in the public schools, has not yet been heard in SJC and is unlikely to make it to the House in time for consideration, if it gets there at all. HB 557, seeking family access to mortality reviews related to persons who die in community DD programs, has likewise passed only its first committee. HB 480, addressing co-pays for special diets for those with metabolic disorders, has been withdrawn by the sponsor; so has HB 511, calling for training in behavioral health for jailers and first responders.

Summary and Status of Bills and Memorials

See the last page of this report for a list of committee and other abbreviations

Autism

HB 22 Autism Insurance Coverage. Rep. Jim Smith. This bill would require the health insurance plans for state and local government employees and public school employees to cover services for children with autism, without an annual dollar limit. This coverage is already required for most individual and group health plans regulated by the state, thanks to a law passed a few years ago that was sponsored by then-Senator Clint Harden, but that law does not apply to the public employee plans. The current state-mandated coverage is limited to a maximum of \$36,000 per year, but the federal Affordable Care Act will eliminate those annual dollar limits for most insurance plans in 2014. Senator Bill O'Neill has co-sponsored this bill. Passed the House and SPAC unanimously; SCORC.

HB 209 Autism Services. Rep. Elizabeth Thomson. Appropriates \$2 million to the Department of Health to support diagnostic evaluations and services to children and adults with autism and for the families of children with autism, and for training for professional staff who work with adults with autism. Identical to SB 213, below. In HAFC. *The House version of HB 2 contains \$230,000 for this purpose.*

HB 552 Therapeutic Horseback Riding. Rep. Candy Spence Ezell. Appropriates \$80,000 to the Department of Finance and Administration to support a therapeutic horseback riding program in Dexter (near Roswell). In HAFC.

SB 213 Autism Services. Sen. Mary Kay Papen. This bill is identical to HB 209, above. In SFC. *The House version of HB 2 contains \$230,000 for this purpose.*

Behavioral Health/Mental Health

HB 77 Regulation of Certain Firearm Sales. Rep. Miguel Garcia. This bill would regulate the purchase of firearms at gun shows. As amended, it would also require the state Administrative Office of the Courts to report to the FBI information about persons involuntarily committed to a mental health facility by court order, as required by federal law, in conjunction with the national database used for background checks of persons seeking to purchase firearms. The bill makes the information transmitted confidential. Passed the House 43 - 26; SJC.

HB 174 Native American Suicide Prevention. Rep. Sharon Clahchischilliage. Appropriates \$155,000 to the Veterans Services Department for a youth suicide prevention program in northwestern New Mexico, using Native American veterans as counselors. Identical to SB 162, below. Tabled in HAFC.

HB 208 Choice of Mental Health Counselors. Rep. Miguel Garcia. This bill would put into law the right of insured persons to choose their own mental health therapist from among those therapists who are part of their insurance company's provider network. Passed the House 67 - 1; SPAC/SCORC.

HB 217 Native American Youth Suicide Prevention. Rep. James Roger Madalena. Appropriates \$300,000 to the Human Services Department to support three Native American youth suicide prevention programs at \$100,000 each, in rural, frontier and urban communities. Tabled in HAFC.

HB 220 Involuntary Mental Health Evaluations. Rep. Jane Powdrell-Culbert. Under current state law, a peace officer may detain and transport an individual involuntarily to a mental health facility for evaluation if a physician or psychologist certifies that the individual, as a result of mental disorder, presents a likelihood of serious harm to self or others and that immediate detention is necessary to prevent such harm. This bill would allow certain additional licensed mental health practitioners to provide the certification that would authorize involuntary evaluation, and allow them to admit individuals into evaluation facilities. Passed HHGIC; pending in HJC.

HB 287 McKinley County Behavioral Health Services. Rep. Ken Martinez. Appropriates \$500,000 to the Department of Health to provide behavioral health services to Native Americans in McKinley County. HAFC.

HB 442 Reporting Persons Ineligible to Purchase Firearms. Rep. Paul Pacheco. This bill would require the state Administrative Office of the Courts to obtain from state court records and report to the FBI the identity of persons involuntarily committed to a mental health facility by court order or found by a court to be incapacitated due to mental illness, in conjunction with the national database used for background checks of persons seeking to purchase firearms. Reporting of such information is required by federal law and the information is confidential. *HB 77 (above) contains a similar provision.* Awaiting House vote.

HB 511 Mental Health Training Requirements. Rep. Ed Sandoval. This bill would require correctional officers, jailers and firefighters to complete courses on crisis management and interactions with persons with mental impairments (such as mental illness, brain injury, autism or developmental disability). Withdrawn by the sponsor.

HB 588 Involuntary Mental Health Treatment Through "Community Engagement". Rep. Rick Miera. After significant amendments, this bill authorizes "community engagement teams" (CETs) to work with persons with mental illness who are believed to be "unlikely to be able to live safely in the community" but are not presenting an immediate danger to themselves or others. The CET would encourage involvement in available mental health treatment services and other needed community resources. CET services would be voluntary and could not be forced on anyone. *DRNM supports the changes that have been made to the bill so far but remains concerned that responsibility for oversight of these pilot programs is given to the Department of Health rather than HSD, where the Behavioral Health Division is housed and which has oversight of the Behavioral Health Collaborative and the mental health services to be provided through Centennial Care.* Awaiting vote by full House.

HJM 19 Children's Mental Health Task Force. Rep. Gail Chasey. Calls for a task force to improve and promote early childhood services and specifically to develop an early childhood mental health plan. Passed the House 37 - 23; SPAC.

HM 51 Bilingual Behavioral Health Professionals. Rep. Rick Miera. This memorial requests the Health Policy Commission to study the causes of the shortage of bilingual behavioral health professionals and make recommendations to overcome these barriers. Passed HHGIC but has now been referred to HRC.

SB 19 School-based Behavioral Health. Sen. Mary Kay Papen. As amended, this bill appropriates \$2.5 million to the Department of Health to support behavioral health services to students from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade. SFC.

SB 162 Native American Suicide Prevention. Sen. John Pinto. This bill is identical to HB 174, above. SFC .

SB 271 Authority for Police Pick-up for Involuntary Mental Health Evaluations. Sen. Mary Kay Papen. This bill is similar to HB 220, above, dealing with the question of which professionals can authorize an involuntary pick-up by a police officer for a mental health evaluation. As currently amended , this bill allows certain mental health professionals licensed for independent practice, if they are affiliated with a community mental health program, to provide the certification that would authorize the police to pick up people for an involuntary evaluation at a mental health facility. The expanded list now includes social workers, advance practice nurses, mental health counselors, and marriage and family therapists. The marriage and family therapists had been deleted from the bill by a unanimous vote in SPAC, but they were added back in SJC, where the entire bill passed by a narrow 6-4 vote. The current bill leaves in place the existing limitation in law that only a physician or psychologist can authorize admission to a mental health evaluation facility. Awaiting vote by full Senate.

SB 447 Native American Suicide Prevention Council. Sen. Benny Shendo and Rep. Sandra Jeff. This bill would establish an advisory council to the state behavioral health purchasing collaborative to provide advice to the state clearinghouse for Native American suicide prevention. The council would be made up of representatives from the various Native American communities in New Mexico.

Passed the Legislature.

SB 558 Peer Support Workers. Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino. This bill sets up a board that would adopt rules and requirements for behavioral health peer support workers in mental health and substance abuse. SPAC/SJC.

SJM 44 Over-medication of children. Sen. Sue Wilson Beffort. This memorial warns of the significant increase in the use of prescription medication to deal with children's behavioral issues and calls on an interim committee of the Legislature to hold a hearing on this issue and consider changes to state law that would promote healthier outcomes for children. Awaiting vote by full Senate.

SM 33 Taking Advantage of Federal Mental Health Funds. Sen. Jacob Candelaria. This memorial points out that under the Affordable Care Act, hundreds of millions of dollars have been made available for behavioral health and substance abuse prevention and treatment, but New Mexico has received very little of this funding. The memorial calls upon the state to become more proactive in seeking such funds to improve and expand these services. SPAC.

Brain Injury

HB 130 Transfer Brain Injury Program to HSD. Rep. Larry Larrañaga. This bill moves the TBI Trust Fund and administration of the brain injury program from the Aging and Long Term Services Department to the Human Services Department. Passed the House 62 - 0; SPAC/SFC.

HB 227 Transfer BIAC to GCD. Rep. Gail Chasey. This bill would transfer the Brain Injury Advisory Council (BIAC) from the DD Planning Council (DDPC) to the Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD). The BIAC provides advice to state agencies on issues affecting persons with brain injuries. The primary rationale for the move is that, as a cross-disability agency, the GCD's mission is more compatible with the BIAC, as the DDPC focuses on issues related to developmental disabilities. Passed the House 65 - 0; SPAC.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing

HB 332 Early Childhood Deaf-Oral Education. Rep. Jimmie Hall. Appropriates \$503,000 to the Children, Youth and Families Department to provide oral language services to deaf and hard of hearing children with cochlear implants. HAFC. *The House version of HB 2 includes \$125,000 for this purpose.*

SB 163 Extension of Certain Licensing Boards. Sen. Carlos Cisneros. This bill "extends the life" of several state licensing boards. As amended, SB 163 deletes any future "sunset" review for the sign language board. Passed the Senate 42 - 0; HBIC.

SB 172 Sign Language Licensing Board. Sen. Nancy Rodriguez. This bill also extends the life of this state licensing board, by simply deleting the requirement for the board to go through a periodic "sunset" review. Passed the Senate 33 - 0; HCPAC.

Deaf Culture Center. Sen. Nancy Rodriguez has requested \$1 million in capital outlay funding for the purchase of land upon which a Deaf Culture Center and apartment complex could eventually be constructed in the Albuquerque area. The center would offer a wide variety of services to the deaf community.

Developmental Disabilities

HB 230 COLA for State-funded Provider Agencies. Rep. Jimmie Hall. Appropriates \$2.65 million to the Department of Health for cost of living increases to DD provider agencies for state-funded services (not Medicaid waiver services). HAFC.

HB 249 DD Wait List Plan. Rep. Elizabeth Thomson. This bill would require the Department of Health to develop a five-year plan to serve everyone on the waiting list, and to update the plan on an annual basis. Implementation of the plan would depend on annual appropriations being made for that purpose. The plan would also include information about the number of people on the waiting list and the number moved off of the waiting list due to previous funding provided for this purpose by the Legislature. Passed the House 66 - 0; SPAC/SFC.

HB 322 Restore DD Provider Rates. Rep. Ed Sandoval. Appropriates \$4.8 million to the Department of Health to restore the rates paid to DD provider agencies to the level that they were at before the 5% cut made in 2011. Identical to SB 323, below. HAFC.

HB 323 Increase DD Provider Rates. Rep. Ed Sandoval. Appropriates \$5.7 million to the Department of Health to increase reimbursements to provider agencies in the DD waiver program. Identical to SB 324, below. HAFC.

HB 469 FIT Provider Rate Increases. Rep. Liz Thomson. Same as SB 281, below. HAFC.

SB 281 FIT Provider Rate Increases. Sen. Howie Morales. Appropriates \$6.9 million to the Department of Health to increase the rates paid to provider agencies in the Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program, pursuant to a 2003 rate study. Identical to HB 469, above. SFC.

SB 323 Restore DD Provider Rates. Sen. Carlos Cisneros. Identical to HB 322, above. SFC.

SB 324 Increase DD Provider Rates. Sen. Carlos Cisneros. Identical to HB 323, above. SFC.

SB 364 Restore DD Provider Rates. Sen. John Sapien. Identical to HB 322 and SB 323, above. SFC.

SB 458 DD Waiver Changes. Sen. Nancy Rodriguez. This bill would require the Department of Health and the Human Services Department to seek federal approval to return to the previous version of the developmental disabilities waiver program, and thus abandon the new version that uses the results of the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) to place participants into categories with defined levels of services and budgets. The bill would also require the departments to obtain legislative approval before making future changes to the waiver program that would change eligibility or level of service determinations. Passed the Senate 32 - 7; awaiting final vote in the House.

SB 564 COLA for State-funded Provider Agencies. Sen. Nancy Rodriguez. Identical to HB 230, above. SFC.

SM 20 DD Waiting List Plan. Sen. William Soules. This memorial calls on the Department of Health to create a subcommittee of the Advisory Council on Quality (the department's advisory committee on developmental disabilities issues) to develop strategies for reducing the length of time people spend on the waiting list for DD waiver services. It further asks the department to develop a report by October 1, 2013, detailing what would need to be done so that, by 2018, no one would have to wait more than three years before getting waiver services. Awaiting final Senate vote.

SJM 35 Training for Health Care Providers and First Responders. Sen. Linda Lopez. This memorial recites a wide range of problems that persons with developmental disabilities have experienced in interacting with first responders and health care providers. It asks the Department of Health to develop a comprehensive training curriculum for such providers, and urges all agencies that employ or oversee the licensing of such persons to require them to receive such training. Awaiting vote by full Senate.

SJM 46 ACA Impact on DD Provider Agencies. Sen. Sue Wilson Beffort. This memorial calls on the Legislative Finance Committee to study the impact on DD provider agencies of the mandate under the Affordable Care Act for employers with more than 50 employees to offer health insurance and to cover a portion of the cost of such coverage. Awaiting vote by full Senate.

Education

HB 459 Separate Special Education Equalization Fund. Rep. Mimi Stewart. This bill separates special education funding from all other components of the current basic school funding system. It does not change the process for calculating the funding that each public school district receives based

on the number of its special education students or their level of need, but it does allow the state to clearly identify (and adjust) the total amount of state funding made available to the districts for special education services. The bill comes in response to a federal ruling that the state has not met its “maintenance of effort” requirement because it reduced state spending for special education (and all other education) in 2010 and 2011, and a related dispute about how much money the state provides for special education. HAFC.

SB 256 Special Education Coordinators. Sen. Michael Padilla. This bill would require all public school districts, within three years, to employ one “special education coordinator” for every 250 students enrolled in the district. The coordinator would have to be a level 3 licensed special education teacher with at least 6 years teaching experience, and would oversee the day to day operations of special education programs in the schools and oversee and arrange IEP meetings. The requirement is to be phased in over 3 years, and the bill includes an appropriation of \$3 million for the first year. Tabled in SEC.

SB 528 School Discipline Policies. Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino. This bill would require all public schools, including charter schools, to adopt school disciplinary policies that emphasize positive behavioral supports, provide alternatives to suspension, expulsion, or referrals to law enforcement, do not require reports to police for petty misconduct, and base disciplinary action on individual circumstances rather than blanket "zero tolerance" approaches. The bill would also impose training requirements for school resource officers, and require school districts to report annually on various disciplinary actions taken. A similar bill was passed in 2011 but was vetoed by the governor. Passed SEC; pending in SJC.

SM 72 Preventing Truancy and Drop-Out. Sen. Gay Kernan. This memorial notes the correlation of truancy and dropping out of school with the "school to jail pipeline", and calls for a task force to recommend steps that schools could take to reduce truancy and dropping out that do not involve arrest or incarceration of students. *The focus of this memorial overlaps with SB 528, above.* Passed SRC; pending in SEC.

SM 86 Positive Behavioral Supports. Sen. Michael Sanchez. This memorial calls on the Public Education Department to encourage positive behavior intervention support systems in public schools, and to encourage training for teachers and principals to implement such systems. SRC/SEC.

Health Care (measures relating to health care reform under the ACA are in a separate section below)

HB 480 Clarifying scope of insurance coverage for inborn errors of metabolism. Rep. Stephanie Garcia Richard. This bill would have made some technical changes to existing law that requires insurance companies to cover special diets needed to prevent disabilities that would otherwise occur due to metabolic disorders, such as PKU. The bill would have ensured that co-pays for the special foods are based on a one-month supply of food rather than per meal or per day. The bill has been withdrawn at the request of the sponsor.

SB 65 Pre-release Medicaid Assistance. Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino. As amended, this bill would require the Human Services Department to suspend, rather than terminate, Medicaid eligibility for those entering a correctional or detention facility for a period expected to be less than one year, and to facilitate re-instatement upon release from the facility. It would also require the state to assist individuals in such facilities to determine likely eligibility for Medicaid, and to apply for Medicaid as appropriate, in advance of their scheduled discharge from such facilities. The substitute version passed the Senate 36 - 0; HJC.

SB 156 Continuity in Access to Prescription Drugs. Sen. Jacob Candelaria. The original version of this bill would have prohibited health insurers from making changes to their prescription drug formulary during a plan year if the change would result in higher co-pays or deductibles for a drug, unless a generic version of the drug is available. It would also require 60 days notice to enrollees before changing the tier level or co-pays for a drug. Many people with chronic health care conditions choose an insurance plan based on its drug formulary and co-pay costs, and this bill is intended to protect them from sudden and unforeseen price increases. As amended, the bill now allows health insurers to make these changes to co-pays and tier levels up to three times per year. Passed the Senate 39 - 0; HBIC/HJC.

SB 296 Prompt prior authorization for prescriptions. Sen. Mary Kay Papen. As amended, this bill calls for development of one common form to be used by all health insurance companies for the purpose of requesting prior authorization if needed for prescription drugs, and would require the companies to respond within three business days of a request for prior authorization. Passed the Senate 38 – 0; HBIC.

Health Care Reform to Implement the ACA

HM 168 Health Insurance Exchange. Rep. Mimi Stewart. This bill would establish a health insurance exchange in New Mexico that meets the requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Legislation on this topic was passed in 2011 but vetoed by the governor, who has now designated the Health Insurance Alliance (HIA) to run the exchange. The New Mexico Attorney General has issued a formal opinion that the existing law authorizing the Alliance does not comply with the requirements of the ACA. As amended, HB 168 sets up a non-profit board to operate the exchange, and the new entity would replace the HIA board. Appointments to the board would be split between the governor and the Legislature. Nine of the 13 board members would be employers or employees of small businesses; the other members would be an insurance company representative, a consumer advocate, the HSD secretary and the state Insurance Superintendent (who would vote only when needed to break a tie). The bill would allow, but not require, the exchange to set standards and determine which insurance plans would be offered, as contemplated by the ACA. This approach would encourage insurers to improve their plans and reduce prices in order to be selected by the exchange. Failed to pass the House on a 30 - 39 vote, but that vote was "reconsidered" so the bill may again be brought up to be voted on by the full House.

HB 366 Conform Insurance Code to ACA. Rep. Jeff Steinborn. This massive (266 pages) bill would amend the state insurance code to come into compliance with the provisions of the ACA. Some of these provisions are of particular importance to persons with disabilities, such as the prohibition of denial of coverage due to pre-existing conditions and disallowing higher premiums based on disability. Passed HHGIC; pending in HJC.

HB 563 Health Insurance Exchange. Rep. Tom Taylor. This is an alternate proposal for establishing a state-operated health insurance exchange in New Mexico. This bill also calls for board appointments to be split between the governor and the Legislature. It would include the Economic Development Secretary as a board member but is less specific than HB 168 as to who would be appointed to most board slots and does not require that most members be employers or small business employees as HB 168 does. Also unlike HB 168, HB 563 makes no mention of navigators/assisters to help guide people through the system of enrolling in appropriate coverage, and makes no reference to Medicaid even though the exchange is required by federal law to provide access to Medicaid enrollment as well as private insurance coverage. This bill specifically bars the exchange from setting standards for health insurance plans or pursuing an "active purchaser" approach that would allow the exchange to get the

best deals for buyers; instead, it directs that any health insurance plan that meets minimum federal requirements must be offered for sale on the exchange. Passed HHGIC; pending in HJC.

HB 564 Licensure of Health Insurance Exchange Navigators. Rep. Tom Taylor. This bill would require a formal licensure process for any individual or organization offering “navigator” or “assister” services in conjunction with the health insurance exchange, and would subject them to training requirements and regulatory oversight by the Superintendent of Insurance. *DRNM believes this approach is inconsistent with the provisions and the intent of the Affordable Care Act, which is to provide assistance through well-established community organizations, to people trying to use the unfamiliar process of the exchange to compare and select health insurance coverage.* HBIC/HJC.

SB 221 Health Insurance Exchange. Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino. This bill has now been combined with SB 589 (Sen. Benny Shendo) into a single bill. The new version strips out most of the consumer protections in earlier bill versions. As amended, the bill calls for a 13-member board of directors, with the insurance superintendent as chair and the remaining appointments split evenly between the governor and the Legislature. The bill provides for navigator services but pointedly omits including assistance with Medicaid enrollment among the navigators’ duties, and would allow creation of the navigator program to be delayed until months after the open enrollment period begins on October 1. The bill also fails to give the exchange board any power to set standards for health plans or to negotiate with insurance companies to procure quality, affordable health plans to be offered on the exchange. The new combined version of the bill is awaiting a vote by the full Senate, which debated it for about 45 minutes on Sunday but then held it over for further debate and action, expected today.

SB 589 Health Insurance Exchange. Sen. Benny Shendo. This bill has been combined with SB 221 into a single new bill; see description of SB 221 above.

Housing

SB 32 Support Services for Long-term Housing. Sen. Richard Martinez. Appropriates \$500,000 to the Mortgage Finance Authority for support services such as case management for homeless persons with disabilities, mental illness or substance abuse to assist them in obtaining and maintaining housing. SFC.

Self-Determination and Community Integration

HB 103 Voter ID Requirements. Rep. Cathrynn Brown. This bill would require all voters, including absentee voters, to provide a picture ID or tribal enrollment document in order to vote. The bill provides for issuing ID cards for those who do not have them. *DRNM has concerns about such measures since some people with disabilities (including some seniors with disabilities) are eligible and legally entitled to vote but do not have such IDs and wouldn’t be able to easily obtain them.* Tabled in HVEC.

HB 155 Fees for Accessible Parking Placards. Rep. Miguel Garcia. This bill would impose a \$5 fee on those applying for accessible (“handicapped”) parking placards; most of the proceeds of the fees collected would go into the disability services fund maintained by the GCD. **This bill has passed the Legislature and is awaiting action by the governor.**

HB 219 Adequate and accessible polling places. Rep. Nate Cote. This bill provides that when a polling place is not part of a consolidated voting center, the polling place must have at least five voting booths, one of which must be accessible to voters with disabilities, it must have at least one voting

machine that is accessible to voters with disabilities, and it must be in a building that is ADA compliant and accessible to voters with disabilities. Passed the House 68 - 0; SRC.

HB 231 Exemption from MVD Fee. Rep. Miguel Garcia and Sen. Linda Lopez. Under this bill, a low-income person with certain physical disabilities or a brain injury would be exempt from the motor vehicle registration fee for one vehicle. Passed HTPWC; HJC/HAFC.

HB 414 Alternative Medical Certifications. Rep. Nate Cote. This bill would authorize advance practice nurses, certified nurse mid-wives and physician assistants to certify or attest to certain things that now must be certified by a physician, if those things fall within the scope of practice of these other medical professionals. For example, this bill would allow the additional categories of medical providers to certify the existence of a mobility impairment for people seeking an accessible parking placard due to their disability. This certification currently must be done by a physician. Awaiting vote by full House.

HB 557 Family Access to Health Research Records. Rep. Liz Thomson. This bill would allow family members of a deceased person to have access to records related to the deceased which are part of any medical research approved by the secretary of the Department of Health that is designed to reduce the morbidity or mortality from any cause or condition of health. It is not clear whether this provision would include the mortality reviews DOH conducts on certain persons with developmental disabilities who die while being served in a community-based program, which are conducted as confidential peer reviews. Passed HHGIC; pending in HJC.

HB 621 Reporting Impairments That Affect Driving. Rep. Tom Anderson. This bill would require certain health care professionals to report to the Motor Vehicle Division information about individuals with a cognitive or functional impairment that would affect the person's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Passed HHGIC; pending in HJC.

HJM 36 Expand Ombudsman to Community Settings. Rep. Rick Miera. This memorial calls on the Long Term Care Ombudsman to convene a task force to make recommendations regarding the potential expansion of the Ombudsman program to cover seniors and persons with disabilities living in community settings. The program is currently limited to persons in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and similar facilities. Passed the House 64 - 0; SPAC.

SB 112 Extending Certain Guardianship Powers. Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino. Under current law, any guardianship arrangement for an adult with a disability ends at the moment the protected person dies. As amended, this bill would extend certain limited powers of a guardian for up to six months after the death of a protected person for the purpose of making funeral arrangements, closing out accounts, and otherwise wrapping up the affairs of the protected person. Notice would have to be provided to any known close family members. The bill has been tabled in SJC and is unlikely to move further this session.

SB 320 Service Animals. Senator Nancy Rodriguez. This bill would align the provisions of New Mexico's Assistance Animal Act with federal regulations for service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The major changes would be to limit state law coverage to service dogs and miniature horses, and to prohibit a person from claiming to have a service dog if the animal is not a trained, legitimate service dog. Passed the Senate 35 - 1; HJC.

SB 291 Parental Notification. Sen. John Ryan. This bill would require notice to the parents of a minor child, or to the guardian of an adult woman found to be “incompetent”, prior to the performance of an abortion, unless a court exempts the woman from the notification requirement. *DRNM’s concern with this legislation is that New Mexico law provides for “limited” guardianships, so not all guardians have authority to make health care decisions for a protected person. And because bearing children is such a fundamental constitutional right, even plenary guardians may not have the authority to provide or withhold consent to an abortion. We note that a similar bill in the House, HB 177, does not cover adults with disabilities and thus does not raise these concerns.* Tabled in SPAC.

SJM 17 Disability Awareness. Sen. Jerry Ortiz y Pino. This memorial designates October as Disability History and Awareness Month and requests that all public schools provide instruction that month for their students, to promote greater understanding and awareness of people with disabilities. The memorial was developed and is being promoted by the Youth Leadership group. **This memorial has now been adopted.**

OTHER

HB 131 Silver Alert for Missing Persons. Rep. Paul Pacheco. This bill would authorize a “Silver Alert” for a missing person over 50 years of age who is known to have a deterioration of mental capacity, such as dementia or a brain injury. Passed the House 65 - 0; SPAC/SJC.

HB 272 Free Elk Hunting Licenses for Veterans with Disabilities. Rep. Phillip Archuleta. This bill directs the state Game and Fish Department to set aside at least five elk-hunting licenses each year for veterans with a service-related disability of at least 50%. Passed the House 65 - 0; SJC.

HB 396 College Logo for License Plates. Rep. Emily Kane. Under this bill, those who qualify for special license plates due to a mobility impairment could request plates that contain the logo of a public New Mexico university, provided that they pay a fee for such a plate. Standard plates for those with mobility impairments are free. Passed the House 65 - 0; SCORC.

SB 152 Non-reversion of Funds for the Office of Guardianship. Sen. Michael Padilla. As introduced, this bill would create a fund at the Office of Guardianship at the DD Planning Council, to receive state appropriations for the program as well as donations, grants, and other income. It would allow the Office of Guardianship to carry over to the next year any funding that might be left over in the fund at the end of a state fiscal year. Generally, any remaining state money at the end of a year must go back (“revert”) to the state general fund. Amended in SFC to allow the DDPC to retain in the fund only gifts and donations rather than state appropriations. Awaiting Senate vote.

SB 171 Disabilities Concerns Subcommittee. Sen. Nancy Rodriguez. This bill would establish a permanent interim committee of the Legislature to address issues of concern to people with disabilities. Interim committees meet on a regular basis in between the regular annual legislative sessions. Currently, a similar committee functions as a subcommittee of the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee. Passed the Senate 33 - 0; awaiting final House vote.

Contacting your Legislators

We encourage you to bring the voice of the disability community to the Legislature! Here's how you can reach legislators during the session:

Telephone: Call the Capitol switchboard at 505-986-4300 and ask for your legislator by name.

E-mail: To find your legislator's e-mail address, log on to the Legislature's "Find Your Legislator" web site, <http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/legislatorsearch.aspx>, and click on the "Alpha List" for either the House or the Senate. Not all legislators have listed email addresses.

U.S. Mail: [Legislator's name], NM State Capitol Bldg., Santa Fe, NM 87503

Don't know who your legislators are? You can find out through the legislative website using your address. Go to the Legislature's "Search by Address" page at http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/district_geocoder.aspx. Enter your complete home address including zip code in the box provided, and click on "Find District". This will show the name and picture of your Representative. To find your Senator, open the drop-down menu for "maps" and select "Senate Districts" instead of "House of Representatives Districts".

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

Legislative Committees

HAFC	House Appropriations and Finance Committee
HAGC	House Agriculture and Water Resources Committee
HBIC	House Business and Industry Committee
HEC	House Education Committee
HHGIC	House Health, Government and Indian Affairs Committee
HJC	House Judiciary Committee
HRC	House Rules Committee
HTPWC	House Transportation and Public Works Committee
HTRC	House Taxation and Revenue Committee
SCORC	Senate Corporations Committee
SEC	Senate Education Committee
SFC	Senate Finance Committee
SIAC	Senate Indian Affairs Committee
SJC	Senate Judiciary Committee
SPAC	Senate Public Affairs Committee
LFC	Legislative Finance Committee (joint House-Senate committee that meets during the interim between legislative sessions)

State Agencies

ALTSD	Aging and Long Term Services Department
DDPC	Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
DOH	Department of Health
GCD	Governor's Commission on Disability
HSD	Human Services Department
PED	Public Education Department