



Legislative Advocacy Guide

*Our mission is to help people
with intellectual disability and
their families enjoy lives of quality,
inclusion and dignity by providing
support, education and advocacy.*

Be empowered. Make a difference!

Although voting is the most powerful tool you have to influence the way government works, writing, calling, e-mailing or visiting your city, county, state and federal officials also plays a critical role in effective advocacy.

Your input and involvement is important in helping your elected officials decide how to vote on the dozens of issues that may affect Harc participants, you, and your family!

In this guide you will find the necessary information to advocate for our intellectually disabled loved ones.

Page	Topic
3-5	The basic governmental processes
6	How a bill becomes a law
7	What you can do outside of the Assembly
8	How to speak at the CGA
9	Sample letter to a legislator
10-13	Legislator contact information

*If you have any questions or concerns,
please contact Andrea Barton Reeves at (860) 218-6028
or at abartonreeves@harc-ct.org.*

We gratefully acknowledge the Connecticut General Assembly Website (www.cga.ct.gov) for providing most of the content of this Guide.

Familiarize Yourself!

Connecticut's General Assembly (CGA)

What is it?

The CGA is the legislative branch of State Government. It is made up of the House of Representatives (151 members) and the Senate (36 members), and enacts laws dealing with the collection and allocation of funds, public welfare, the environment, education, public works, civil and criminal law and other matters.

When does the CGA meet?

Our legislature is considered to be part-time. Regular sessions of the General Assembly are held from **January to June in odd-numbered years**, and from February to May in even-numbered years.

How does it work?

The CGA meets in the State Capitol, and holds most public hearings in the adjoining Legislative Office Building (LOB). Committees, which may operate year-round, meet to review proposed legislation and make recommendations to the full House and Senate.

Making a Law

How do I find out when a proposal for new legislation (bill) will be voted on?

Once a bill has been voted favorably out of committee, it is listed on the Calendar. After it has been on the Calendar for three days it can be voted on by the CGA. The House publishes a GO LIST just prior to a House session. This list

of bills and/or resolutions on the Calendar reflects the legislation the House intends to take up on a particular session day, and can be found under the “House” section of www.cga.ct.gov.

Bill Information and Status

How can I find the status of a particular bill?

At the top of the CGA website (www.cga.ct.gov) is a Quick Search by bill number, but you can also search by topic of interest if you don't know the number. Here you can find how your own legislator voted on the particular issue. There is also a tracking feature available that will e-mail you updates on your bill of interest.

Contact Your Legislators

Who are my Representative and Senator and how do I contact them?

In the “Find Your Legislator” section of the site, you may enter your address in the respective fields to bring up a list of your house, senate and congressional representatives. You may also go to the “View District Town Maps” link to locate your representative by town. These pages will link you to the legislators' personal sites where their contact information should be located.

Where can I get a list of all Legislators?

Click the House or Senate links, then Members, and this page gives you the alphabetical list of members, including district number, a link to email and website, political party, and a link to bills introduced.

*There is a list of legislators and their contact information on the last pages of this booklet.

How do I Visit?

What is the address and phone number of the Capitol?
State Capitol, 210 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 240-0100 Office of Legislative Management.

Which entrances are open to the public?
At the Capitol, the Southwest/Capitol Avenue and west entrances (facing the Legislative Office Building) are open to the public. The west entrance is handicapped accessible with a ramp and automatic door.

At the Legislative Office Building, parking is free and there are public entrances at the west side of the first floor facing Broad Street, from the parking garage (leading to the third floor) and on the third floor facing the Capitol. All are handicapped accessible.

Where are the public galleries to view legislative session and public hearing events?

Legislative sessions are held at the Capitol Building in Hartford. The public gallery of the House may be reached by stairways from the 3rd floor; the Senate galleries open onto the 4th floor. Committee meeting and public hearing rooms are located in the adjoining Legislative Office Building. Limited parking is available in the LOB garage off Broad St. and Capitol Avenue.

Are there services for those with physical disabilities?

The Capitol and Legislative Office Building are administered in compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act. Requests for accommodations should be directed to the Office of Legislative Management (860) 240-0100

How Does A Bill Become A Law?

1. Any Senator or General Assembly member may propose or sponsor a new law. Ideas for laws can come from many sources such as citizens, interest groups, public officials or the Governor.
2. At the legislator's direction, the idea is drafted as a bill. The legislator may ask other legislators to become co-sponsors.
3. The bill is introduced when the Senate Secretary or General Assembly Clerk reads aloud the bill's number, sponsor and title during a legislative session.
4. The bill is usually sent to a committee which studies it and makes changes, if needed. These changes are called amendments. **Committees have open meetings (hearings) where the public may speak about a bill. Committees also have open meetings to discuss a bill after a hearing.**
5. If the committee approves the bill, it is reported to the House and its title is read again. This is the bill's second reading.
6. When scheduled by the Senate President or Assembly Speaker, the bill's title is read for the third time, and it is debated and voted on. A bill passes if it receives a majority of votes.
7. The bill follows a similar path of first reading, committee consideration, second reading, third reading and final passage in the second house. After both houses agree on the bill, it is sent to the Governor. In most cases, the bill becomes law when signed by the Governor.
8. The Governor may veto a bill by refusing to sign it and returning it to the Legislature with noted objections or proposed changes. There are several types of vetoes. Sometimes, a vetoed bill can still become law.

How to Participate as a Citizen

The Legislative Process

Legislators are very concerned about what the people in their district want and need. Everybody's opinions are invited and welcomed by the state legislators. Much of what they actually decide depends on the views, interests and preferences of the citizens who elect them.

Get to Know Your Legislators

The best way to get to know your legislators on a personal basis is to spend time with them when the Legislature is not meeting. Arrange a meeting during the months between sessions when they are home.

Your legislators are also your neighbors. You share many of the same interests and concerns, so make a strong effort to build on the common ground you both hold. Take the time to find out who they are as people.

You can contact your legislators in a number of ways:

Personal visit. Call the office, introduce yourself, tell the legislator or the legislative assistant what you would like to discuss, and make an appointment for a visit. If you plan a visit, be prepared for your discussion. Know what you want to say, be factual, and make your comments as brief and specific as you can. If you do not know something, be willing to admit it and offer to follow up with more information later, which is also an avenue for further discussion.

Attend a Town Hall Meeting. Most legislators conduct periodic town hall meetings at various locations in their district. This is a good opportunity to meet your legislator and to express your views and concerns in an informal setting.

Write a letter. Express your views and request the member's attention through the mail. Make your letters brief, to the point, clear, and formal. Include your mailing address and phone number so the legislator knows where to respond.

Send an e-mail message. Like letters, e-mails should be brief, to the point, clear, and formal. Include your name and mailing address, as well as your e-mail address, and let the legislator know how you'd prefer to be contacted.

Network with Us. Much of the information you need to be effective in the legislative process can be obtained from other concerned and active citizens. Work with us at Harc by attending the meetings we set up, and bring your own story and opinions to share.

Host a Coffee Meeting at your home. This is your chance to connect the Connecticut legislators with Harc families in order to talk about their experiences and how we need their help in the legislative session.

How to Use Your Voice at the CGA

Step 1: Before you arrive

- Know the number of the bill you're interested in; call the bill information room at (860) 240-0555 or go to www.cga.ct.gov.
- Plan what you are going to say. Many committees are now asking that you come to the LOB two hours before the hearing, sign up to testify at that time and bring 40 copies of your testimony with you. **We can do all of this for you. Just contact Andrea Barton Reeves and she can submit your written testimony and add your name to the list of people testifying.**
- Know the issue: who it affects, what others feel about it any other information you are able to gather.
- Notify the committee if you plan to bring a large group, or any people with wheelchairs.

Step 2: When you come to testify

- The legislators, agency heads, and invited guests speak first, then the list of guests speak in order of their sign-up.
- There is a separate lists for speakers with special needs
- Be courteous, formal, and attentive to other speakers.

Step 3: It's your turn to speak

- Introduce yourself by beginning with "Madam Chair/Mr. Chairman and members of the committee" and being very specific about who you are and where you are from.
- Mention the bill number and title of the bill you will be speaking about, and whether you support it or not.
- Speak for 3-5 minutes for the bill, and avoid repeating what has been already said by others.
- Be sure to talk about how the bill affects you personally.
- You may associate yourself to be in support of previous speakers.

Step 4: Following your bill

- During the legislative session, you may call the bill status information room (860-240-0555) to see the progression of your bill, or you may visit www.cga.ct.gov.

Sample Letter to a Legislator

Return Address	Your Name Address City, State, Zip Code Phone number
Date	[insert date]
Heading	The Honorable [insert full name] Address City, State, Zip Code
Salutation	Dear Representative [or Senator] [insert last name]:
Introduce yourself and state your purpose	As a resident of Smithtown and a parent, I am writing to ask for your support of House Bill 123. This bill would support funding for Parents as Teachers (PAT) programs in our community.
Explain why you are making this request.	We know that the most important development of a young child occurs in the first few years of life, and our state priorities need to reflect that knowledge. Through the education and support of parents of young children, the Parents as Teachers program has proven effective in increasing children's school readiness, improving their later school success, and increasing their parents' involvement in school. If passed, this legislation would help our children start school ready to learn.
Make a connection to his/her constituency through a personal story or any facts or figures available	I have witnessed the impact of Parents as Teachers in my own family....[AND/OR] PAT can save our community dollars through early identification of development delays. In our case....[AND/OR] In our community, only X percent of children arrive at kindergarten ready to learn....
Restate your request, and ask him/her to follow-up	I urge you to support this important legislation. Investing in the early years saves us all money later on. I would appreciate a written reply that states how you voted on this issue.
Thank the legislator for his/her time.	Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, [Your name]

Federal Government, Governor and Lieutenant Governor

Senator
Richard Blumenthal
30 Lewis Street, Suite 101
Hartford, CT 06103
(860) 258 – 6940

Representative
John Larson
221 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 278-8888

Senator Joseph Lieberman
One Constitution Plaza
7th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103
(860) 549-8463

Comptroller Kevin Lembo
Office of the State Comptroller
The State of Connecticut
55 Elm Street
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 702 – 3300
Comptroller.Lembo@po.state.ct.us

Governor Dannel P. Malloy
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 566 – 4840
Fax: 860 524 – 7395
Governor.Malloy@ct.gov

Lieutenant Governor
Nancy Wyman
Room 304
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106
(860) 534-7384
(866) 712 – 6998 (toll free)
LtGovernor.Wyman@ct.gov

**Mail may be sent to any Legislator at this address:
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106 – 1591**

Senators

John Fonfara
District #1 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 3900
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-0043
Fonfara@senatedems.ct.gov

Eric Coleman
District #2 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-0528
Eric.Coleman@senatedems.ct.gov

Gary LeBeau
District #3 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 417
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8029
LeBeau@senatedems.ct.gov

Steve Cassano
District # 4 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 2100
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860 -240-5302
Cassano@senatedems.ct.gov

Beth Bye
District #5 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 3100
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Beth.Bye@cga.ct.gov

Theresa Gerratana
District #6 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-0584
Gerratana@senatedems.ct.gov

John A. Kissel
District #7 (Rep.)
16 Frew Terrace
Enfield, CT 06082
H: 860-745-0668
O: 860-240-0531

John.A.Kissel@cga.ct.gov

Kevin Witkos
District #8 (Rep.)
Leg. Office Building
Room 3400
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8800

Kevin.Witkos@cga.ct.gov

Paul Doyle
District #9 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 3500
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-1420

Doyle@senatedems.ct.gov

Representatives

Matthew Ritter
District #1 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4003
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8505

Matthew.ritter@cga.ct.gov

Minnie Gonzalez
District #3 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4039
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Minnie.Gonzalez@cga.ct.gov

Kelvin Roldan
District #4 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 1001
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Kelvin.Roldan@cga.ct.gov

Marie Lopez Kirkley Bey
District #5 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4012
O: 860 - 240-8500

Marie.Lopez.Kirkley-Bey@cga.ct.gov

Hector Robles
District #6 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4070
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Hector.Robles@cga.ct.gov

Douglas McCrory
District #7 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4066
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Douglas.McCrory@cga.ct.gov

Jason Rojas
District #9 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4001
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Jason.Rojas@cga.ct.gov

Henry Genga
District #10 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4065
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Henry.Genga@cga.ct.gov

Timothy Larson
District #11 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 5006
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585

Timothy.Larson@cga.ct.gov

Geoff Luxenberg
District #12 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4000
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Geoff.Luxenberg@cga.ct.gov

David Baram
District #15 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4061
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
David.Baram@cga.ct.gov

David McCluskey
District #20 (Dem.)
43 Elmhurst Circle
West Hartford, CT 06110
H: 860-521-3554
C: 860-240-8585
David.McCluskey@cga.ct.gov

Peter Tercyak
District #26 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4029
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Peter.Tercyak@cga.ct.gov

Jack Thompson
District #13 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4031
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Jack.Thompson@cga.ct.gov

Andrew Fleishmann
District #18 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 3101
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-0420
Andrew.Fleishmann@cga.ct.gov

Tim O'Brien
District #24 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Tim.Obrien@cga.ct.gov

Sandy Nafis
District #27 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4047
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Sandy.Nafis@cga.ct.gov

Bill Aman
District #14 (Rep.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 3900
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8700
Bill.Aman@cga.ct.gov

Brian Becker
District #19 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4009
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Brian.Becker@cga.ct.gov

John Geragosian
District #25 (Dem.)
39 Pendleton Road
New Britain, CT 06053
H: 860-224-1701
C: 860-240-8542
John.Geragosian@cga.ct.gov

Russell Morin
District #28 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4115
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Russell.Morin@cga.ct.gov

Antonio Guerrero
District #29 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 2301
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Tony.Guerrera@cga.ct.gov

Prasad Srinivasan
District #31 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4200
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 800 842-1423
O: 860 240 8700

Peggy Sayers
District #60 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4049
Hartford, CT 06106
O: 860-240-8585
Peggy.Sayers@cga.ct.gov

Prasad.Srinivasan@housegop.ct.gov

Elaine O'Brien
District #61 (Dem.)
Legislative Office Building
Room 4022
Hartford, CT 06106
O:860-240-8585
Elaine.Obrien@cga.ct.gov

HARC, INC.
900 Asylum Avenue
Hartford, CT 06105
(860) 218 – 6000
www.harc-ct.org



For 60 years Harc, Inc. (HARC) has been helping individuals with intellectual disability and their families enjoy lives of quality, inclusion, and dignity by providing support, education, and advocacy. HARC serves 1500 people in its Birth-to-Three, supported employment, day and residential programs, recreation, respite, family support and elderly programs.

2011 Issues and Advocacy Priorities

Community providers are partners with the State of Connecticut in providing cost-effective services to families in need. HARC strongly supports funding that:

- 1. Reflects the actual cost of providing quality day and residential services and**
- 2. Enables community providers to remain financially sound.**

HARC asks the Governor and the General Assembly to:

- **Make no further cuts to DDS and Private Provider Budgets under the proposed FY 2012-2013 budget, or under the Governor’s Rescission and Deficit Mitigations Plans** Past budget cuts and years of flat funding have made it increasingly difficult to provide critical services to families. Over the past two fiscal years alone, HARC has sustained over \$287,000 in losses in its day programs. These losses are unsustainable and will eventually lead to drastic reductions in services to families.
- **Support fair wages for our staff** –Due to chronic underfunding and budget cuts, HARC staff have not had a wage increase in over three years, forcing many staff to work several jobs to earn a living wage. Non-profit providers must have the support they need to pay staff the wages they deserve.
- **Support allowing non-profit Human Service Providers’ participation in the State’s health insurance system** – Non-profit Human Service organizations can no longer bear the soaring costs of providing health insurance for their employees. This year, HARC encountered a 26% increase in health insurance premiums, the cost of which our employees had to bear. Non-profits need relief from health insurance increases by being able to offer their employees the option of enrolling in the state’s health insurance plan.
- **Allow families to accept respite services without losing their waiting list status for residential services.** - As DDS regulations now stand, a family who accepts respite services while on a waiting list for residential placement becomes ineligible for residential services. Families need a variety of supports to provide the best quality of life for their loved ones and should not have to make a choice between respite and full residential services.
- **Eliminate the DSS cap on recovering reasonable room and board rate expenses for community residences.** The rate cap was enacted without full appreciation of its consequences, including the inability to recoup the costs of necessary repairs and renovations.
- **Guarantee funding for all graduates and age-outs.**

As students finish high school, they become eligible for DDS services. During the last legislative session, only half of graduates were initially included in the budget. It was not until the last days of the session, after heavy lobbying by HARC and other advocates, that funds were increased to cover all graduates, but with delayed admission dates. Such delays require families to make difficult choices, such as foregoing employment in order to stay home to care for their loved one until they can be admitted to a graduate program.

- **Eliminate Unfunded State Mandates on Community Providers and Administrative rules changes.** – In recent years, changes such as mandating a 15-minute billing interval system for independent living and different contract requirements for various state agencies have proven to be unduly burdensome and costly to administer, especially at a time when HARC and other providers cannot pay our staff the wages they deserve. A work simplification and paperwork reduction plan would reduce private providers’ obligations to comply with myriad state agency requirements and provide a single standard for all contracts with every State agency.

Approved by the Board of Directors December 2010