

## **PENNSYLVANIA REHABILITATION COUNCIL (PaRC)**

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### **WEEKLY UPDATE October 9, 2020**

\*If you no longer wish to receive this update, please contact Katie Haley at [mary.haley@ucpcentralpa.org](mailto:mary.haley@ucpcentralpa.org) to have your name removed.\*

**NOTE:** This update is for informational purposes only. The PaRC and Support Staff are not responsible for the accuracy of this information. Some of the information found in this update you may have already received from another source. The PaRC or the Support Staff do not use this update as a vehicle to express their views and positions. As of **October 9, 2020**, all links have been verified. Please credit the PaRC Support Project for any information forwarded to others. Thank You.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** The mission of the Council is to inform and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature, and the Governor on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities.

**The PaRC 2019 Annual Report can be found on our webpage or by clicking on the following link**

<http://parac.org/reports/2019AnnualReport.pdf>

**Find Your Local CAC Meeting Dates:** Please go to our website [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org) and click on the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) link to find dates, locations, times, agendas and minutes, etc. for information on your CAC.

**\*\*\* PaRC Calendar Year 2020 –Please Mark your Calendars \*\*\***

### **FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS**

PaRC Full Council meetings will be held at the **Harrisburg Hilton** from 9:30 AM until 3:30 PM (unless otherwise noted). We will also have parking passes for those who park in the Strawberry Square Parking Garage. Please plan to stay for the entire meeting.

**November 18, 2020  
(virtual meeting)**

The agenda will be posted on the PaRC website approx. 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

[http://parac.org/council\\_mtgs.html](http://parac.org/council_mtgs.html)

**PaRC Member Committee Conference Calls – Please Mark your Calendars**

**CareerLink/WIOA**

Next Call: To be Determined

**Executive Committee Conference Call**

Next Call: Friday October 21, 2020 at 10:00 AM

**Legislative and Public Awareness Conference Call**

Next Call: To be Determined

**OVR Policy and State Plan Committee / Customer Satisfaction Conference Call**

Next Call: To be Determined

**Social Media/Outreach Committee Conference Call**

Next Call: Wednesday November 4, 2020 at 10:00 AM

**Transition & Education**

Next Call: To be Determined

**Ad Hoc By Law Committee Conference Call**

**Next Call: Tuesday October 20, 2020 at 10:00 AM**

The PaRC Social Media and Outreach Committee in partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) produced 6 videos, 5 of which are OVR individual and business success stories, as well as a PaRC Recruitment video. We want to thank both the individuals and companies that participated in making these videos and OVR for supporting the project. The PaRC is pleased to present the following 6 videos. Please feel free to share.

[PaRC Recruitment](#)

[PaRC Aha Moment](#)

[PaRC Dream Partnership](#)

[PaRC Herr Foods Inc.](#)

[PaRC Keystone Blind Association](#)

[PaRC Assistive Technology](#)

**PaRC COUNCIL OPENINGS:** The PaRC is looking for candidates to fill new openings on the council. If interested, please go to our website ([www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org)) and fill out an application.

## **1.) Meet the woman making sure Black people are not excluded from disability visibility**

**Consultant and producer Andraéa LaVant says she strives "to infiltrate spaces that those with disabilities have never been before."**

**By Donna Owens**

**Oct. 5, 2020**

Andraéa LaVant wants you to know that she is many things, a living snapshot of humanity's vast kaleidoscope. She is a Black woman. A native Midwesterner. A college graduate and business owner. A daughter, sister, and friend.

LaVant is also among the estimated 61 million people in the U.S., according to federal data, living with a disability — in her case, a form of muscular dystrophy called spinal muscular atrophy, or SMA for short. The 37-year-old was diagnosed at age 2 with a genetic disease that, among other things, affects the central nervous system and voluntary muscle movement. To continue reading, go to: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/meet-woman-making-sure-black-people-aren-t-excluded-disability-n1242157>

## **2.) Eligible Voters With Disabilities Increase By Nearly 20%**

**by Shaun Heasley**

**October 2, 2020**

As the November election draws near, new research finds that the number of voters with disabilities across the nation has grown exponentially and could make the difference in how races are decided.

There are an estimated 38.3 million eligible voters with disabilities in the U.S., according to a report out this month from the Rutgers University Program for Disability Research. That represents an 19.8% increase since 2008 and outpaces a 12% rise in voters without disabilities during the same period. To

continue reading, go to:

<https://www.disabilityscoop.com/2020/10/02/eligible-voters-with-disabilities-increase-by-nearly-20/29018/>

### **3.) Forwarded by Linda Williams**

#### **Learn about the PA ABLE Savings Program!**

##### **Free webinar for individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals.**

A PA ABLE Savings Program account gives individuals with qualified disabilities (Eligible Individuals), and their families and friends a tax-free way to save for a wide range of disability-related expenses while maintaining government benefits. The state and federal tax-free investment options are offered to encourage Eligible Individuals and their families to save private funds to support health, independence, and quality of life.

To help you learn about the important features and benefits of PA ABLE, the Pennsylvania Treasury Department is hosting free webinars.

Some of the topics that we will discuss include eligibility requirements for opening a PA ABLE account, the federal and state tax benefits of PA ABLE, and how PA ABLE account interacts with current benefits.

- [Thursday, October 15, 2020 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM EST](#)
- [Tuesday, November 10, 2020 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST](#)

### **4.) Women's Wheelchair Dance Team to Host Virtual Experience for Women with Disabilities**

**NEWS PROVIDED BY Rollettes**

**Oct 06, 2020**

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 6, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- The Rollettes, a Los Angeles based dance team that is comprised of seven women who use wheelchairs, is hosting their 8th annual Rollettes

Experience virtually this year due to COVID-19. In previous years, women who use wheelchairs from around the globe travel to Los Angeles and spend quality time meeting other women who have similar disabilities. To read more, go to:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/womens-wheelchair-dance-team-to-host-virtual-experience-for-women-with-disabilities-301146210.html>

## **5.) Breaking the silence on speech disability**

**October 6, 2020**

**By Jenelle Ryan**

Communication appears to be fundamentally important for success in our society. Peers often judge vocabulary, articulation, accent, and eloquence as measures of intelligence. Our society idolizes successful communicators, and the idea that public speaking is key to leadership permeates our culture.

When we claim to champion diversity, inclusion, and acceptance of people with disabilities, why hasn't our society embraced speech disabilities in our inclusion efforts? To continue reading, go to: <https://georgiastatesignal.com/breaking-the-silence-on-speech-disability/>

## **6.) Advocacy Campaign Encourages People with Disabilities to Vote**

**By Abilities in Motion**

**Oct 06, 2020**

Reading, PA— Abilities in Motion (AIM) is mobilizing its force of disability advocates to encourage voter registration and participation among people with disabilities ahead of the November general election.

Throughout the month of October, AIM will feature voting-focused social media content, billboards, and video PSAs aligned with the theme "Your Vote Your Voice on November 3rd."

“We want to make sure all voters understand their voting rights, clarify any concerns they have about mailing their ballots, and help ensure that all polling places are physically accessible to all,” said Executive Director Stephanie Quigley. To read more, go to: <https://www.bctv.org/2020/10/06/advocacy-campaign-encourages-people-with-disabilities-to-vote/>

## **7.) Covid-19 long-haulers and the experience of ‘hidden’ disabilities**

**By HARRY T. PAUL  
OCTOBER 7, 2020**

I vividly recall standing with one of my college mentors in front of an iron lung in the lobby of Boston Children’s Hospital. He told me how polio had led to the last disability revolution because people with the disease made the public aware of disabilities and fought for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

While the ADA was instrumental in protecting the rights of disabled individuals at school and in the workplace, its focus was on those with mobility disabilities, partially due to the large number of polio survivors who used aids like wheelchairs, canes, and braces. This growing population centered these mobility disabilities in culture to the point where a wheelchair became the universal symbol for disability. To continue reading, go to: <https://www.statnews.com/2020/10/07/covid-19-long-haulers-experience-hidden-disabilities/>

## **8.) Ugg and Zappos release new line of footwear designed for people with disabilities**

**By Deb Kiner | [dkiner@pennlive.com](mailto:dkiner@pennlive.com)  
October 7, 2020**

UGG and Zappos.com have launched a footwear collection designed for people with disabilities.

Ugg Universal will become part of the Zappos Adaptive collection launched in July that allows customers to buy single shoes or pairs in mixed sizes.

The new Uggs include the Classic Short and Neumel styles that have oversized double zippers, rear pull tabs and toggle-adjusted stretch laces. To read more, go to:

<https://www.pennlive.com/life/2020/10/ugg-and-zappos-release-new-line-of-footwear-designed-for-people-with-disabilities.html>

## **9.) Disability employment awareness reaches milestone year**

**By JO ANITA MILEY Garrison Public Affairs**

**October 7, 2020**

National Disability Employment Awareness Month each October raises awareness on disability employment issues and highlights the wide-ranging contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

This year's theme, "Increasing Access and Opportunity," recognizes and celebrates the access to opportunity the Americans with Disabilities Act created for employees with disabilities. The theme also encourages inclusion and highlights the goal of full inclusion in America's workplaces.

This is not only the 75th annual observance but also the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The ADA is landmark civil rights legislation that works to increase access and opportunity for people with disabilities across society, including in the workplace. To continue reading, go to:

[https://www.theredstonerocket.com/news/article\\_6b2b46e6-08b5-11eb-9ab9-1f2c1ef167ae.html](https://www.theredstonerocket.com/news/article_6b2b46e6-08b5-11eb-9ab9-1f2c1ef167ae.html)

## **10.) Pitt Professor Takes on Policy Challenges for People with Disabilities**

**Amerigo Allegretto [aallegretto@pitt.edu](mailto:aallegretto@pitt.edu)**

**October 7, 2020**



Mark Schmeler is facing down a challenge that has long loomed in Pittsburgh, even after the Americans with Disabilities Act passed in 1990.

Schmeler, associate professor in Pitt's School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, recently began his tenure on the City-County Task Force on Disability, nominated by Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto. He will focus on unconscious bias toward people with disabilities as reflected by poor policies or policies that are not well-interpreted or enforced.

"This will hopefully pave the way for Pittsburgh residents who face everyday challenges with disabilities to have improved lives," said Schmeler, who is also vice chair for education and training in the school's Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology. "The mayor is familiar with our work related to assistive technology education, research, clinical, policy and advocacy." To continue reading, go to:

<https://www.pittwire.pitt.edu/news/pitt-professor-takes-policy-challenges-people-disabilities>

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