



## DISABILITIES RIGHTS CENTER, Inc.

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For Immediate Release

July 17, 2012

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### NH Governor Candidates Forum on Disability Issues

Prominent disability organizations are joining together to sponsor a forum on July 29 in Manchester to hear from gubernatorial candidates on disability-related issues. The event is open to the public and the media. All six major party candidates have confirmed attendance: Jackie Cilley, Maggie Hassan, Bill Kennedy, Ovide Lamontagne, Kevin Smith, and Robert Tarr.

“The next Governor of New Hampshire will make fundamental decisions about the future of our most vulnerable citizens. That individual will change the lives of seniors, individuals with disabilities, and all who have major health needs,” said Donald L. Shumway, president and CEO of Crotched Mountain Foundation. “I urge people of all abilities to attend this forum, ask tough questions, and become informed about the candidates for the Governor’s office. Every vote counts and this is a unique opportunity to hear, first hand, where the candidates stand on issues that define our communities.”

There are an estimated 200,000 New Hampshire residents with disabilities. It is a diverse group: their ranks include veterans with service-connected disabilities; fifteen percent of school-age children; and over a third of people over the age of 65. Disability issues are not partisan issues: people with disabilities and their families are Democrats, Republicans, and Independents.

“People with disabilities and their friends and families are keenly interested in where the candidates for Governor stand on the issues that affect them personally. People with disabilities can be, and are, independent, contributing members of society, and policies on education, employment and training programs are critical to those objectives,” said Richard Cohen, Executive Director, Disabilities Rights Center.

Members of the audience will have a chance to submit questions in advance. “As a parent of two children with autism, like anyone I’m concerned about my children’s future. I want to hear where the candidates stand when it comes to fully funding waitlists for people with disabilities,” said Linda Quintanilha, President of ABLE New Hampshire, an advocacy group for people with disabilities. Other topics are expected to include health care, employment, education, and government services and benefits.

Organizers and sponsors of the Forum include the Disabilities Rights Center, ABLE New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities, the New Hampshire Challenge, the UNH Institute on Disability, Crotched Mountain Rehabilitation Center, Living Innovations, Community Support Network, and the Private Provider Network. Supporters include NAMI New Hampshire, the Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire, Granite State Independent Living, and Spinney Associates.

A flyer with more information about the Governor Candidates Forum can be found here:  
<http://www.drcnh.org/Governorforum.pdf>