

# DRC DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER - NH

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## **Disability Unscripted: 2020 Candidates on Inclusion & Accessibility Transcript of John Delaney: Concord NH, May 11, 2019**

<https://drcnh.org/videos/john-delaney-unscripted-campaign-inclusion-and-accessibility-copy/>

**DRC-NH Staff:** Nineteen percent of voters are people with disabilities.

**John Delaney:** Yes.

**DRC-NH Staff:** Can you talk about how you'll make your campaign accessible to people with disabilities, and also if you're elected, how you'll make sure your administration is accessible to people with disabilities?

**JD:** Well, so I think one of the great, by the way, bipartisan pieces of legislation, that has ever been created is the Americans with Disabilities Act. And in many ways we need to actually update it with version 2.0.

**DRC-NH Staff:** Right.

**JD:** Because we've learned some things since then, and some of the ways it's enforced, etc., could be improved in a new version, and I'd like to work on that as President, which is what I call American for Disabilities version 2.0.

We have worked really hard to make all of our offices accessible. And I think with maybe one exception, we've been able to do that. But it has been an intentional strategy of our campaign is to actually make sure we have accessible offices. Again, because the tone at the top matters, you got to lead by example, you can't go out to the American people and say, "I care about Americans with disabilities," and not try to do that.

And listen, this is a really personal issue to me in many respects, because let me just tell you a brief story about my grandfather. He came to this country in 1923 from England, I'm three quarters Irish, one quarter English. He came with his seven brothers and sisters on a ship on August 20th, 1923. And his mom was with him too. He went to Ellis Island, and his seven brothers and sisters and his mother were let into the country, but he was detained and scheduled to be deported. He was a boy. And the reason for that is because he only had one arm.

**DRC-NH Staff:** Wow.

**JD:** And back then, we didn't let people into the country who had disabilities.

*Protection and Advocacy System for New Hampshire*

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**DRC-NH Staff:** Yeah.

**JD:** So, if you go back and read the Ellis Island records you see the record of him, and you see an “X” on his arm, indicating that he's one armed. So, they send him to Staten Island to be deported, but his family got him an appeal. Again, his seven brothers and sisters, his mom got in, so they must have filed an appeal.

The appeal was held a few months later in the great hall of Ellis Island. There were hundreds of people there, and my grandfather who's a boy, is in the back of the room and the judge walks in. And my grandfather sees, as the judge is putting on his robe, that the judge also had just one arm.

**DRC-NH Staff:** Wow.

**JD:** And my grandfather used to tell the story, ‘that's when I knew I'd be an American.’ And the one armed judge looked at him and said, "I'm not supposed to let you in, but I am. Make something of your life."

**DRC-NH Staff:** Yeah.

**JD:** So, but for that, I'm not standing here. And he went and worked in a pencil factory his whole life. The Joseph Dixon pencil factory in Jersey City, New Jersey, which is the only job he could get, because he was disabled. I care about this issue.

**DRC-NH Staff:** Yeah. Great, thank you.

**JD:** Thank you.

*Candidate video fades out to informational slide*

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