**disABILITY LINK – Legislative and Public Policy Quarterly Report – January 2016**

**The Georgia Get Out The Disability Vote (GGOTDV) Campaign**

**Why:**

* **Voting is a civil right**
* **Voting is power**
* **Voting changes the community/state/nation/world**
* Millions of American citizens do not exercise our right to vote…we do not influence our communities and we do not feel the satisfaction of participating in the democratic process, a right granted in the Constitution of the United States
* Just as with many other aspects of life, people with disabilities face a multitude of physical, programmatic and attitudinal barriers, for this purpose, to the right to vote privately and independently - people with disabilities voted in record highs in 2008, even though studies from this decade tell us that 60% of voters with disabilities faced a significant barrier to voting - we also know that people with disabilities are interested in public affairs and government and want to participate, yet the fact remains that many times we are effectively “locked out” of polling booths and forced to remain home on Election Day
* More than one million Georgians have some type of disability and approximately 652,000 are voting-age
* Nationally, there would be 3 million more voters if the disability community voted at the same rate as people without disabilities
* The voting registration rate for people with disabilities is 2.3% lower and the voter turnout rate is 5.7% lower than for eligible people without disabilities
* Almost a quarter (24%) of the disability community find it difficult to vote in person at a polling station

**How:**

* By collaboration, education, support, and empowerment
* Provide series of resources, education and informational events and activities about the voting process – e.g., (a) Nothing About Us Without Us on January 7 is a presentation by and discussion with Chris Harvey, Director of the Elections Division, Georgia Secretary of State’s office, (b) created a flier with information and invitation to get involved
* Support people to attend Disability at at the Capitol, February 18, the theme is, “The Disability Vote – Feel the Power”

**Resources:**

* <http://sos.ga.gov/> or 404-656-2871
* <http://www.mvp.sos.ga.gov/MVP/mvp.do> - to check your voting status
* <https://registertovote.sos.ga.gov/GAOLVR/welcome.do#no-back-button> – to register
* <http://www.ada.gov/> or 800-514-0301
* [http://www.adasoutheast.org/index.php or 800-949-4232](http://www.adasoutheast.org/index.php%20or%20800-949-4232)
* <http://votesmart.org/> or 888-868-3762
* <http://thegao.org/what-we-do/programs/hava/voting-rights/> or 800-537-2329

**Conclusions:**

* *“Bad officials are elected by good citizens who do not vote,”* George Jean Nathan
* *“In reality, there is no such thing as not voting, you either vote by voting or you vote by staying at home and tacitly doubling the value of some diehard’s vote,”* David Foster Wallace
* *“The most common way people give up their power is thinking they don’t have any,”* Alice Walker
* *“Vote as if your life depends on it. Because it does,”* Justin Dart
* **disABILITY LINK supports people with disabilities; to register to vote; be educated on the candidates and issues; be recognized as citizens and constituents; and vote**