



**Rhode Island
Disability Law Center**

The Designated Protection and
Advocacy System for Rhode Island



**The Alliance for Better Long Term
Care: Office of the Rhode Island State
Ombudsman for Long Term Care**

In celebration of Residents' Rights Month 2016: *My Vote Matters*, the Alliance for Better Long Term Care, Rhode Island's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and the Rhode Island Disability Law Center, Rhode Island's Protection and Advocacy agency for people with disabilities are pleased to provide you with information about voting rights and voting resources to assist you in fulfilling your duty to support the voting rights of your residents.

Residents with the right to vote may vote if they are registered to vote, want to vote and can make choices about how to vote. They may need assistance or assistive technology to complete the registration form, an application for a mail ballot, or the ballot. Unless a court has specifically determined that they lack the capacity to vote, if they meet the registration requirements, your residents have the right to vote. **We are jointly promoting that you offer all residents the opportunity to vote unless a court has specifically determined that they lack the capacity to vote.** We recognize that questions may arise regarding some residents' capacity to vote, particularly if they have a legal guardian, or have cognitive limitations due to Alzheimer's disease, another dementia, or another disability. However, the right to vote is a fundamental right protected by the Constitution. Therefore, the right to vote cannot be taken away except by a court that specifically finds after notice and hearing that the individual lacks the capacity to vote. Absent such a court order, all residents who meet the registration requirements have the right to vote and should be offered the opportunity to vote.

You and the residents may call the Rhode Island Disability Law Center (RIDLC) if you have disability-related questions about voting rights. RIDLC maintains a Voting Rights Hotline during business hours and when the polls are open. We are also enclosing information about voting rights, registration requirements, photo ID requirements for people who vote at the polls, voting deadlines, a copy of the Mail Ballot Application for the Presidential Election and information on how you can support your residents who wish to vote. We hope you will disseminate this information to your residents by posting the flyers or providing a copy to each resident. Please contact us if you would like to request electronic copies of these enclosures.

Author Sharon Salzberg wrote: "voting is the expression of our commitment to ourselves, one another, this country and this world." With this information and the enclosed resources, we hope you will take pride in supporting the voting rights of your residents and play an active role in promoting Residents' Rights Month 2016: *My Vote Matters* so that your residents may express their "commitment to this country and the world" during this election season. Please contact us with questions.

Sincerely,

Kate Bowden
Rhode Island Disability Law Center
Tel:401-831-3150

Lorrena Nardi
Alliance for Better Long Term Care
Office of the Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Tel: 401-785-3340