

**Public Policy Committee Minutes**  
**Sheraton on Capitol Square**  
**Columbus, Ohio**  
**March 9, 2018**  
**9:15 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.**

**Members Present:**

X	Dara Walburn, Chair		
	Lori Kershner, Vice Chair		
X	Bobbi Burke	X	Paula Rabidoux
X	Michael Denlinger		Jill Radler
X	Matt Harrison	X	Michael Richards
X	Emilia Jackson		Ilka Riddle
	Jean Jakovlic		Mark Smith
X	Vicki Jenkins	X	Jo Spargo
	Karen Kerr		Mindy Vance
	Lori Kershner		Brandon White
X	Shannon Komisarek	X	Sue Willis
	Laura Leach	X	Victor Wilson
X	Heather McFarlin		
X	Blaine O’Leary	X	Diane Cox (SA)
X	James Plasencia		

**Other Council Members/Guests Present**

Marci Straughter	Michael Schroeder
Brenda Brandon	Betsy O’Leary
Rochelle Hall-Rollins	Christine Brown
Rhonda Rich	Jeremy Morris
Ben Pesich	Renee Wood
Jeremy Morris	Casper Shahan
Erich Bittner	Billy Mae Ware
Beth Graham	Kelly Brown
Eric Rathburn	Rick Colby

**Staff:**

Paul Jarvis	Carla Cox
Carolyn Knight	Robin Shipp
Ken Latham	

### **Call to Order:**

Chairwoman Walburn called the committee to order at 9:17 a.m. Introductions were offered.

### **Minutes:**

Chairwoman Walburn called for approval of the minutes. James Plasencia moved the minutes be approved as drafted. Blaine O'Leary seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed. Blaine O'Leary abstained.

### **Old Business:**

Chairwoman Walburn moved to the first item on the agenda, a review of the evaluations of the DD Awareness and Advocacy Day. Paul Jarvis provided the committee with a report that broke down the evaluations by participant category. The evaluations indicated that participants were extremely satisfied with the speakers, were satisfied with the online registration and event check in, and were satisfied with the event as a whole. Jarvis broke down specific feedback about what people liked and what people did not like about the event.

Carolyn Knight, Diane Cox, Michael Schroeder and Victor Wilson asked questions and discussed the challenges related to conducting the event at the Statehouse. Jarvis responded to questions and indicated that he would recommend alternatives around Capitol Square, such as also using the Riffe Center, for meetings. Jarvis also discussed issues related to providing Fact Sheets. Carolyn Knight, Dara Walburn, and Sue Willis commented on the effort to ensure that individuals tell their stories rather than focus on what bills to talk about.

Christine Brown suggested that in future years, there may be a need to conduct two events. Diane Cox commented the event is streamed live online for those who get cut out of registration. She also asked if it would make sense to extend registration after the cap is met to those individuals who only want to meet with legislators. Sue Willis stated the negative feedback is the same each year and we need to do a better job of preparing people for what to expect when they come. Vicki Jenkins asked if Capitol Square would set aside parking for the event and commented that pre-event information needs information about available parking. Dara Walburn commented that the negative feedback should be addressed. Carolyn Knight and Sue Willis stated the feedback is the same each year. Knight and Paula Rabidoux said the event is much more difficult to manage than what everyone sees. Brenda Brandon commented that parking was difficult for her. Blaine O'Leary asked if parking could be reserved for counties that have further to drive and take longer to get to Columbus.

Jo Spargo asked for follow up related to holding the DD Council meeting immediately following the event to see if that helped members, if it made it more difficult for members to attend both, or if there was other feedback related to that approach.

### **New Business:**

Chairwoman Walburn moved to the next item on the agenda. Under new business, she asked Paul Jarvis to lead discussion on the Data and Policy Research Grant. Jarvis explained the Notice of Funds Available for this grant is issued each year to allow applicants to identify which project they would like to work on. Jarvis provided the committee with a list of the previous research topics that were developed in 2017. Jarvis asked the committee if he should eliminate the topics that have been selected and reissue the Notice of Funds Available with the remaining topics. Paula Rabidoux said she thought it was a good idea to go with the topics already created, but allow for additions to the list.

Sue Willis asked for a list of which topics for which no applications were received. Jarvis responded that topics number 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 on the handout provided. Willis asked if there were too many topics because there were too few applications. Knight and Jarvis responded that it has always been difficult to get applications for this project due to the complex nature of it. Jarvis said if the committee wanted more topics, he would go back to the issue committees in July to seek other topics. Victor Wilson stated his preference was to keep the number lower. Diane Cox noted it was a change in how topics were selected because issue committees selected topics rather than Public Policy selecting the topic.

Christine Brown commented the topic related to the marriage penalty is a big issue for self-advocates. She believed something should be done on this topic not only in Ohio but across the country. Renee Wood stated she believed an economic impact statement on the benefits of marriage should be completed. Diane Cox added that if the list of topics was reduced, it would be a good idea to know exactly what you hope to accomplish public policy-wise.

Michael Denlinger asked when the Self Advocacy Task Force would be formed. Carolyn Knight responded that more information would be forthcoming.

Jo Spargo, serving as interim Vice Chair, moved to the next item on the agenda, the Legislative Update. Paul Jarvis provided the committee with an update on the bills that he has been tracking. The committee was provided with a status sheet of all legislation. Carolyn Knight asked how likely House Bill 574, a bill to provide Medicaid Waiver payment to family members providing services to their children, would be to pass. Jarvis and Erich Bittner both commented they believed there was a low likelihood of the bill passing.

Jarvis provided the committee with a revised letter on HR 620, the federal legislation related to ADA Education and Reform that would require pre-notification in all ADA accessibility lawsuits. Jarvis stated the Council had previously signed on to a letter that provided information on the issue. The new letter would actively oppose the bill. Sue Willis moved that Council sign on to the letter in opposition to HR 620. Paula Rabidoux

seconded the motion. No further discussion occurred. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed. There were no abstentions.

Chairwoman Walburn moved to the next item on the agenda, the state plan language. Jarvis outlined the three projects that Public Policy is responsible for. He is recommending that the committee make no changes to the language. Carolyn Knight commented that changes can be made, but they are not necessary.

Chairwoman Walburn moved to the next item on the agenda, a discussion of the Disability Policy Seminar. She asked Blaine O'Leary to start. Blaine shared his experience from the conference, indicating that he got a chance to meet with Congressmen Jim Jordan and Steve Stivers, as well as staff for Jim Renacci's office. He shared his personal issue of increasing the social security asset limit for those individuals with disabilities who are working. He said he also talked about transportation and enjoyed the experience.

Dara Walburn shared her experience at the conference. She enjoyed spending time with other attendees from Ohio. Walburn said at first she was nervous, but her confidence grew. She thought the legislators were awesome and the staff was good too.

Diane Cox added that she believed Council staff does a great job preparing not only Council members, but other attendees from Ohio, and continues to impress with organizational skills. She also said she participated in one meeting with Dara and that Council's financial support was very well placed by sending Dara to advocate because she performed like, "a rock star." Cox continued to say that while the legislative meetings and the experience is excellent, the seminar sessions are presented in a way that are politically biased and aggressive. Cox indicated that conversations with LEND trainees who attended also noticed the tone. She said the conference's focus on issues were not disability-focused, but on health and human service topics in general. She said the focus of the conference presentations were geared towards protesting and riling people up for conflicts with congressional offices, which is not generally a good approach to legislative meetings, especially for first-time attendees and self-advocates.

Jo Spargo agreed with Diane's comments. Spargo said the day on Capitol Hill was the highlight for everyone. She echoed that Council staff preparation was helpful, but that conference sessions were not as helpful. Spargo said she believed the conference speakers were using people with disabilities to gain policy change that didn't directly impact people with disabilities. She said the inclusion of other issues muddied the waters for disability-specific advocacy and she was not there for other issues.

Victor Wilson asked how Dara or Blaine felt about participating in the conference the first two days in comparison to the third day on Capitol Hill. Blaine O'Leary said he understood the first two days, but the highlight was the third day. He added that Council staff did a good job of preparing members for what to expect on Day 3 so that the first two days weren't as confusing. Dara said the first two days were not what she expected, and the highlight for her was meeting legislators on Capitol Hill.

Diane Cox asked for clarification of Victor's question and Dara Walburn added that based on the conference, she did expect there to be differences between her and the legislators. She added that she was nervous the first two days, but felt better the third day. Victor Wilson added that he and Dara talked during the conference and he assured her that advocacy did not require members to get arrested or to protest. Carolyn Knight commented that she understood one of the speakers was from ADAPT, and they are the reason Independent Living Centers and Councils do not get along around the country, because of this difference in approach. Jeremy Morris, executive director of the Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council, added that was the reason there is not a single ADAPT Chapter in Ohio. He said Ohioans do not approve of that approach. Morris said he attended the Disability Policy Seminar this year to see if it was more focused on policy instead of the ADAPT approach.

Renee Wood commented that the policy seminar should focus on policy, not on action. She said there is a time for action, but people need to get briefed on the policy first. Wood said there is a time and place for aggressive action, but meeting with a legislator is not that time. She said that approach should be reserved for when you can't get a legislator's ear.

Paul Jarvis said the committee was running out of time, but that he wanted to highlight a few items from the conference. He said Erich Bittner attended on behalf of the Ohio Association of County Boards of Developmental Disabilities and also spoke during the Ohio Caucus to share effective strategies for working with legislative staff. Bittner recently worked as a staff person in the Ohio Senate. Jarvis also shared with the committee that Dara was nervous because she was afraid legislators were going to be mean to her. He said that was the underlying message given to self-advocates who were attending for the first time, and that the conference was winding people up unnecessarily. Jarvis provided the committee with a copy of the materials he used to prepare Council members and others who would be participating in Hill visits.

Jarvis also said he had written comments from both Karen Kerr and Loris Kershner. He said the members are wondering if it would be better to just go to the Capitol Hill visits rather than attend the conference. Jarvis said they also talked about Home Choice and Money Follows the Person and Medicaid Block Grant issue in meetings.

Dara Walburn said she thought it would be better to just do the meetings. Rochelle Hall-Rollins commented that she thinks a statement should be sent to the conference because there may be other states who feel the same way. Jarvis asked the committee if it would be okay to bring this topic back up in July to discuss options. The committee is short on time and there is still a speaker waiting to present. There were no objections to this idea. Erich Bittner added that he attended the conference to learn more about issues and he said he learned more from self-advocates asking questions at the end of each panel than he did from any of the presenters. He also said he agreed with much of what participants discussed and that self-advocates should never be afraid to share their story with policymakers.

Chairwoman Walburn moved to the next item on the agenda, GAB Sessions. She introduced Rick Colby, who is the grantee for the GAB Sessions. Colby introduced himself to the committee. He talked about the select group of young adults who have been attending the General Assembly Briefing Sessions. He said as a participant in the sessions, he has learned a lot about disability issues that he didn't know. He said legislative staffers look forward to these bite-sized training sessions. Colby said there is a large turnover of staff and that these sessions are great at getting staff up to speed. Colby commended Diane Cox for her leadership of the sessions.

Sue Willis commented that in all her years, the GAB Sessions are one of the best public policy projects Council has come up with. Rochelle Hall-Rollins asked if the sessions could be streamed. Jarvis said they would look at possibly recording a session, but that he was leery of streaming. He said he didn't want to create a fishbowl atmosphere where the legislative staff attending the briefing felt like they were being watched. He added that legislative staff are very interested in hearing from self-advocates.

**Adjournment:**

With no further business before the committee, Victor Wilson made a motion to adjourn. Jim Plasencia seconded the motion. Without objection, the committee adjourned at 10:50 a.m.