

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
316 W. 12th St. Ste. 405,
Austin, TX 78701
512-478-3366 (Voice & TTY)
512-478-3370 (Fax)
www.cotwd.org



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

25th Annual Convention of the
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
to be held in Houston
on
September 19th -21st, 2003

CTD is funded in part by a grant from the Texas Council for Developmental
Disabilities, and SBC Foundation.

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities is a grassroots, cross-disability
organization dedicated to advocating for the basic civil rights of
equal opportunity and independence for all people with disabilities.

CTD Annual Report Available

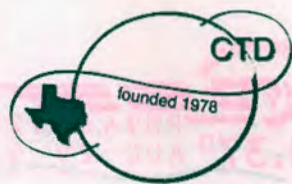
In these very challenging and changing times, CTD has been working hard for Texans with disabilities. We hope you will take a few minutes from your day and look over our report covering activities in the 2003 Legislature and more. The report can be requested by calling CTD at 512/478-3366 or from our website at www.cotwd.org

The dominant issue was the state budget. Facing a shortfall of \$10 billion, the state's elected leadership chose not to seek a balance of revenue increases and spending cuts, as many other states have done, but rather chose to balance the budget entirely with spending cuts. Funding for health and human services, including services for people with disabilities, was targeted for major cuts. The first budget passed by the House eliminated community services for 85,000 current recipients. By the end of the session, almost all of those services were restored, largely in response to round-the-clock advocacy.

To those organizations who are current members, we thank you for your support. CTD's member list is an important tool in advocacy. Advocacy is about systems change, about influencing policy and practice which affects the daily lives of people with disabilities, families, friends and service providers. CTD can't do it without a strong base of organizational members.

CTD worked in-depth on a dozen other bills. CTD staff served on eleven state-level committees on disability policy and practice. We launched a project to provide training and technical assistance to public housing authorities with the goal of increasing affordable, accessible, integrated housing. We completed a detailed study on personal assistant services for use by the Legislature.

CTD also drew national attention to the potential of people with disabilities, pulling off what ABC World News called "the most inspiring story of the year". Team Everest '03 twice made history; first becoming the largest cross-disability team to reach Mt. Everest Base Camp at 17,500 feet, then Expedition Leader Gary Guller becoming the first person with one limb to summit Mt. Everest at 29,000+ feet, the world's tallest mountain.



Messenger

The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

August/September 2003

Lex Frieden to Keynote Landmark CTD Convention

25th Annual Convention, September 19-21, 2003 in Houston

Lex Frieden, a major figure in Texas advocacy history and present Chair of the National Council on Disability will be the keynote speaker for a weekend of learning, advocacy, fellowship, and coalition building. Come to Houston and discuss breaking disability issues, prioritize the work of CTD, share information, learn strategies to advocate for yourself or your family members and make new friends.

The theme of CTD's convention is Rededication: Disability Advocacy for the Next 25 Years.

As always, the CTD Convention has a significant focus on advocacy:

- Report on the 2003 Texas Legislature
- Workshop topics include Erosion of the ADA, Grass Roots Advocacy and Mental Health Advocacy
- Speakers from the political world that is so important to you
- Resolutions proceedings, a classic grass-roots process where you vote on and direct the work of CTD.

We will also honor achievement with our Annual Awards ceremony, a presentation by members of the history-making Team Everest '03 expedition, and special recognition of the visionaries who founded CTD 25 years ago.

The convention costs are very reasonable and we can promise you it will be time well spent! Special registration discounts are available for folks in Harris County. There's still time to register! Call CTD at 1-512-478-3366 for a registration packet or download it from our website: www.cotwd.org

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD and VOTE on SEPT. 13!

The state of Texas will hold a Proposed Constitutional Amendments election on Saturday, September 13, 2003. It is important that you have the information to make informed decisions about the 22 proposed amendments to the State Constitution. The following propositions are of specific importance to Texans with disabilities –

Proposition 12: Proposition 12 is about more than doctors, hospitals and nursing homes. The proposition would reduce access to trial by jury and affect thousands of Texans by limiting non-economic damages in civil cases including, but not limited to, medical malpractice cases. Negligent health care providers and others would be less accountable for their actions when they cause harm, injury or worse.

Proposition 13: Proposition 13 would authorize a county, city, town, and junior college district to freeze property taxes on a residential homestead of a person who is disabled or aged 65 or older. Increases are particularly hard on persons on fixed incomes, who may have to sell their homes in the face of ever-rising local property taxes

Proposition 17: Proposition 17 would prohibit an increase in school property taxes on residence homesteads of disabled persons. The proposed amendment would grant disabled persons the same beneficial tax treatment that elderly persons currently granted.