



News

February 1988

AIRLINE ACCESS Laws and Lawsuits

Congressman James Traficant (D-Ohio) has introduced legislation that would amend the Federal Aviation Act of 1958 to prohibit airlines from restricting blind passengers to certain seating. Currently visually impaired passengers are often barred from sitting on emergency exit rows, or forced to sit in bulkhead seating or face arrest. CTD board member Betty Huffman was recently threatened with this choice.

HR 3883 would add the following provision to the act:

"A carrier shall not use visual acuity or a passengers use of a white cane or dog guide as the basis for establishing any restriction on seating in the aircraft."

The Air Carriers Act of 1986 should have addressed this issue but the Federal Aviation Administration, FAA, refuses to discuss (in the development of the regulations for the Air Carriers Act) what it considers "safety issues". The FAA considers the seating issue to be a "safety issue", yet James Gashel of the National Federation of the Blind says there is no data supporting this claim. Chances for passage of HR 3883 look good. Disabled consumers

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involved in the Reg.-Neg. (the regulation development process for the Air Carriers Act). Interestingly the Tallarico family of Missouri won a \$92,000 lawsuit against an airline under the Air Carriers Access Act because the airline refused to take their daughter, Polly, who is disabled.



VOTE ON SUPER TUESDAY - MARCH 8, 1988

Too many of us take the right to vote for granted. The Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 says that all voting places must be accessible. Texas also has a state law which requires access.

Your constitutional right to vote is a priceless heritage. To have a chance for positive change that will make a real difference in your life, you have to exercise your right to vote. Make sure you do on March 8, 1988.

You must be registered to vote 30 days before the election. Call your county office for a voter card, fill it out and mail it back. Is your voting place accessible?? If not, please call CTD.

(Adapted from an article by George Johnson).

ANNOUNCEMENT

NEW DIRECTOR HIRED!

CTD is going through a transition of our own. As you probably read in the Quarterly Newsletter, Stephanie Thomas is leaving the Executive Director position at the end of February. Alan Meyer has been hired as the new Executive Director of CTD.

Alan has had a long history in the disability rights and independent living movement. Previously Alan has served as the Executive Director of the Houston Center for Independent Living and at different times as the Executive Director and Administrative Director for Independent Life Styles, a shared attendant services program in Houston. Alan has served for three years as Treasurer of CTD, as well as serving on numerous local committees and Task Forces. In addition Alan was one of the founders of the Director's Association of Texas Independent Living Centers. Alan also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Phillipines for two years and has worked in the private sector business world as well. Alan brings extensive experience and expertise and we are excited to have him on board.

Leigh Leslie, CTD Community Affairs Coordinator, is leaving CTD at the end of February also. This position will be filled once Alan has started work. Leigh will be greatly missed but we wish her well in her new job with ARC-Texas.

BEING YOUR OWN BOSS - LITERALLY

Owning your own business is part of the "American Dream" for many people. The small Business Administration, SBA, may be able to help make this dream a reality for some disabled individuals.

SBA has two programs relating to small businesses and disabled persons. Handicapped Assistance Loan or HAL I deals with sheltered workshop kinds of businesses. HAL II is a program for businesses run 100% by disabled persons.

To get a HAL II loan you must be pretty prepared, but its three percent interest rate could make it worth the while. If you decide to apply you will need the following: financial information from the past two years (if you have an existing business), explanation of your experience in this area, a description of your management skills, your credit rating, good equity ability (money of your own you put in to match your debt money), and reasonable collateral. In addition, you will need to develop a business plan with marketing plan, a budget and cash plan.

These requirements are negotiable. In addition, the SBA and the Senior Core of Retired Executives, SCORE (an organization of retired business people who are willing to assist on business issues,) can provide assistance in developing plans, putting together your application, etc. SBA provides seminars on these topics and SCORE can help with putting together a business plan, etc.

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

Using federally reallocated dollars, TRC is proposing funding several innovative projects from October 1, 1988-September 30, 1989. Project priorities are as follows: (1) Housing, (2) Transportation, (3) Mental health services for the deaf, (4) Adults with cerebral palsy, (5) Other projects serving those with severe/catastrophic disabilities. Proposals should be submitted to the TRC Regional Director by May 31st, 1988. For more information contact your Regional Director, Charles Schiesser at the TRC Central Office, or see the Texas Register February 23, 1988.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The Legislative Education Board met on February 16, 1988. The Board heard comments from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) regarding issues that are currently being addressed by TEA, the Sunset Commission, and the legislature.

One of the issues discussed was the relevancy of the public vocational education programs. Apparently, the business and industry sectors have repeatedly informed TEA that the skills currently being taught in vocational education programs are obsolete and are being rapidly replaced by technology.

TEA informed the Legislative Education Board that in the future, TEA plans to put less of an emphasis on student participation in obsolete programs. Ironically vocational education programs will be continued for handicapped students.

FEDERAL ISSUES

- The National Council on the Handicapped has produced a new report which outlines and evaluates the progress of the Federal government on disability issues. The report "On the Threshold of Independence" is available from NCH, call (202) 267-3846 for more information.

- HR 3619 will address the issue of improving voting access for people who are blind or visually impaired. The "Visually Impaired Voters Assistance Act of 1987 would require the Federal Elections Commission to work with the states to find out what enlarged print voting aids they currently have, to notify publicly and make available this equipment and report to Congress their findings.

- The state of Illinois has set up a self-sufficiency trust fund through which parents of people with disabilities can pool their funds to ensure their children will be taken care of after the parents pass away. For more information contact the National Foundation for the Handicapped, 1850 K Street, Washington D.C. 20006, (202) 778-8117.

- Family and Medical Leave Act, HR 925, is headed for a House vote. The bill provides 18 weeks job protected unpaid leave (for birth, adoption or serious illness of child or parent) in civil services, or 10 weeks in the private sector. The companion bill S 249 is still in committee.

- According to the Congressional Budget Office funding for Medicare covered long term care has decreased \$2.4 billion since 1984.

- HR 88 would amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow an additional exempted amount for disabilities, including: paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia, amputation and deafness. HR 632 would allow an additional \$600 deduction for deafness. HR 1395 provides similar deductions for people with physical disabilities.

- The Office of Management and Budget is urging HUD to reduce funding in '89 for 202 Housing to 7,000 units (down from over 10,000 units), and restrict use of 90% of these remaining units for the handicapped, defined as chronically mentally ill and homeless. Meanwhile Reagan has just signed a bill authorizing funding for 12,000 new 202 units for '88 and '89.

- Texas received \$1,642,145 in 1988 UMTA Section 16(b)(2) grants. 16(b)(2) grants are for private non-profit organizations to provide transportation for elderly and handicapped persons. Texas ranked 5th from the top.



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Ron Poston a self-employed small businessperson who is disabled, used the HAL II among other programs as part of his vocational rehabilitation to start his own business. His first business plan was his I.W.R.P. Creative planning like this can help you get over the biggest hurdle, having enough equity.

If you have questions Ernest Alferez, the SBA representative for East Texas in Dallas can help. His number is 214/767-0379.

LinkUp America

Link Up America, LUA, is a program to help households that cannot afford telephone service. It includes reduced hook up charges, a four month period to pay remaining hook up charges and deposits based on past credit history. LUA does not cover equipment, wiring, monthly telephone bills or optional services. Under the LUA program the regular \$60-\$65 hook up charge will cost only up to \$30.

You may be eligible if:

* Your household has not had telephone service for three months or longer. (You can get the service only once in a two year period).

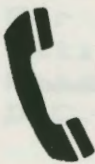
* You are not a dependent for Federal Income Tax, unless you are over 60 years old.

* You meet the income test in one of these ways:

1) Your income is below the federal poverty level.

2) You receive benefits from AFDC, Food Stamps, WIC, SSI, Home Energy Assistance Program or Medical Assistance Program

3) Your most recent Federal income tax return shows you are below the PUC specified level.



Texas is one of four states in which this program is being tested. The Federal Communications Commission, the Texas PUC, Texas Telephone Association and Southwestern Bell are working to provide this program. It is estimated 180,000 Texas households are eligible.

8 For more information call
1-800-832-5465.

CONSUMER OR COMMODITY?

by Stephanie Thomas

Disability rights advocates in Texas have many important issues facing us in the near future. Should state agencies be combined; how much funding should be available for interpreters, attendant services and community based programs; which disability groups will be served by transition services, supported employment, MHMR and independent living programs; and what is adequate health care coverage, are just a few examples. Programs are being designed and redesigned, funding levels are being set and legislative issues are being chosen.

Disability services are big dollar issues, not as big as some other issues, but big enough to attract attention. A lot of businesses are funded through these programs. A lot of jobs are on the line. Disability advocates do not often think of our programs in this way, but other people do. People coming from many different philosophical perspectives are working to shape how these programs are designed and implemented.

Unfortunately, "consumer control", the philosophy of CTD and the independent living movement, is a stranger to much of this work. "Consumer control" is the philosophy that people with disabilities who use services should control how those services are designed and implemented. Without the active involvement of advocates with disabilities, "consumer control" will be more the exception than the rule. It's your choice. Are disabled people

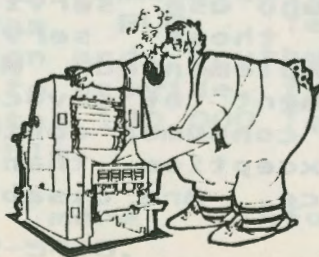
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to be consumers of their services—people who make choices about the programs they use, or commodities—people to be moved and shuffled through the system?

Other interest groups will be there to plan, discuss and work on the issues. We must be willing to do the same. Attending agency board meetings, testifying at public hearings, documentary and communicating about problems or better ways of doing things, holding people to their promises, are all ways we can be part of the debate and part of the process for change.

One of my favorite quotes is from Frederick Douglas. "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." To be treated as equals we must be there with the rest of them. To shed the role of docile recipients of the goodness and benevolence of others we must be actively taking part when the pie is being sliced up.

We must be willing to take risks, and not be afraid to make mistakes. Let's face it, lots of other people out there are making plenty of them. And remember your disability is not your enemy. It is one of your sources of power. It is part of what makes you the expert that you are.



INTERNSHIP AVAILABLE

Summer 1988

The Texas Civil Liberties Union is conducting a search for the annual recipient of its Joan Glantz Memorial Internship in Civil Liberties.

Glantz was a front-line fighter in the struggle for human freedom, working through the ACLU and other human rights organizations, to secure equality for all.

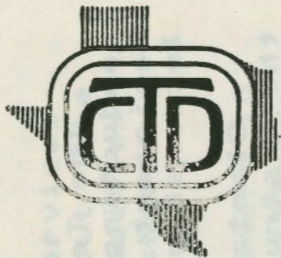
The internship is open to undergraduate students at Texas colleges and universities. Interns will work on public education projects at the TCLU state headquarters in Austin from June 1 to August 15. Sample projects might include:

- * Preparation of a report documenting civil liberties abuses in small communities;
- * Working with labor unions to develop opposition to drug testing programs.

To apply, send a resume, list of three references, a writing sample (article in campus newspaper, class assignment, etc.) and a 250-300 word essay on why you are interested in this internship. Application deadline is March 15.

The stipend for this 8-week internship is \$1,500. The Joan Glantz Memorial Internship Committee will make the 1988 selection by April 15.

Send application to Gara LaMarche, TCLU, 1611 East First Street, Austin, Texas 78702-4455.



Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

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