

FRCD Newsletter

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President-Elect and Vice-President-Elect Announce New Disability Services Plan

President-Elect Barack Obama and Vice President-Elect Joe Biden have announced the following commitment regarding services for children and adults with disabilities:

- Fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Task the Secretary of Education with identifying and recommending strategies to overcome barriers to education for people with disabilities
- Appoint Judges and Justices who respect laws designed to protect workers with disabilities
- Restore funding to the agencies tasked with enforcing anti-discrimination laws that protect workers with disabilities
- Approve universal health care legislation that will assure that Americans with disabilities will have quality, affordable, portable coverage that will allow them to take a job without fear of losing coverage
- People with disabilities who lose their Medicare or Medicaid eligibility by taking a job, but still cannot afford coverage, will be provided a subsidy in order to purchase coverage
- Prohibit insurers from denying coverage on the basis of pre-existing conditions
- Reinstate a Clinton Executive Order aimed at hiring an additional 100,000 federal employees with disabilities within five years
- Require the federal government and employers who are federal contractors to “take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities”
- Direct the Secretary of Labor to bring together employers, employer associations, human resources professionals, disability advocates, service providers, and the labor movement to identify, promote, and disseminate best practices in accommodating workers with disabilities,
- Launch an aggressive effort to educate employers about tax benefits like the Disabled Access Tax Credit, a Tax Deduction for Architectural and Transportation Barrier Removal, and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit so that more employers use them to hire greater numbers of employees with disabilities
- Establish a National Commission on People with Disabilities, Employment, and Social Security that looks at overcoming work disincentives in the SSDI, SSI, Medicare and Medicaid programs, revisits the Ticket to Work program and current definitions of ‘substantial gainful activity’
- Expand the Family and Medical Leave Act by reducing the threshold for which employers are covered from companies with 50 or more employees to those with 25 or more

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**CPS Reading Scores for Students
with Disabilities Decline, see page 2**

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CPS Reading Scores for Disabled Students Decline

Access Living's initial review of the 2008 Illinois School Report Card data shows that the reading skills of students with disabilities attending the Chicago Public Schools have deteriorated. Access Living, in the weeks to come, will be looking at the achievement gap between CPS students with and without disabilities, and comparing these students to other students with disabilities in our state. The following data for students with disabilities comes from the district wide report cards for CPS:

In 2007 at grade 3: 19% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 20.4% were reading at or above standards.

In 2007 at grade 4: 18.1% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 18.6% were reading at or above standards.

In 2007 at grade 5: 14.6% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 14.4% were reading at or above standards.

In 2007 at grade 6: 17.6% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 23.3% were reading at or above standards.

In 2007 at grade 7: 28.4% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 22.8% were reading at or above standards.

In 2007 at grade 8: 30.5% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 30.2% were reading at or above standards.

In 2007 at grade 11: 7.5% were reading at or above standards; **in 2008** 6.7% were reading at or above standards.

In 2006 the CPS state report card listed a graduation rate for its students with disabilities of 59%, in 2007 that rate declined to 42.7%, and in 2008 that rate increased to 72.3%.

(Information from Rod Estevan, Access Living e-mail, 10/31/2008)

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- Mandate a 'reasonable amount of sick leave', minimally at least 7 paid sick days a year for all workers
- Assure the rights affirmed in the Olmstead decision and approve the Community Choice Act and the CLASS Act
- Streamline the Social Security approval process
- Protect voting rights
- Invest in assistive technologies

(From TASH In Action e-mail 11/14/2008; for details, visit <http://www.barackobama.com>)
