



The year has started at a fast and furious pace and shows no promise of slowing down in the near future. In February, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs welcomed the newest member of its staff, Ms. Jennifer Bollinger, as Program Coordinator for Statewide Independent Living Council. A Baton Rouge native, Jennifer attended Louisiana State University with a Bachelor's of Education and graduated from the LSU Law School last year. She is currently working closely with SILC council members to craft the State Plan for Independent Living for 2011-2013. Jennifer has also been appointed to the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council and is proving to be a valuable asset to our staff.

In March, I was given the privilege of addressing the Christopher Reeve Foundation "Live without Limits" conference in New Orleans. The focus of discussions was to address the utilization of private vs. public resources within the disability community. As a result of the meeting the Reeves Foundation expanded its quality of life grant applications to all attendees in Louisiana. The quality of life grant is awarded to an individual with a spinal cord injury, and can be up to \$15,000 per recipient.

In late March, GODA received a request from the Work Pays Coalition to support the initiative of Louisiana becoming a "Model State Employer" of individuals with disabilities. Mack Marsh and Christian Dabdoub presented information regarding this initiative at the GACDA Meeting on January 12th and petitioned the council to draft an executive order be presented to the Governor for consideration. At this time GODA is working with the administration to have an official executive order filed.

With the legislative chambers currently in session, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is tracking and monitoring over 130 bills that directly or indirectly affect disability affairs. Every Thursday, throughout the session, we have hosted workgroup meetings to discuss the progress of legislative bills relevant to those in the disability community. A few key bills GODA is currently tracking:

HB626	BARROW	BOARDS/COMMISSIONS: Replaces the composition and membership of all statutorily created boards, commissions, and like entities
HB732	NORTON	STUDENT/DISCIPLINE: Prohibits corporal punishment in public elementary and secondary schools



HB959	HINES	HEALTH/HOME CARE: Imposes a moratorium on implementation of the resource allocation models administered by the Department of Health and Hospitals and provides for new implementation recommendations based on national best practices
HB979	SIMON	STATE DEPARTMENTS: Authorizes the Dept. of Health and Hospitals to contract for the operation of state inpatient mental health facilities and certain services provided at such facilities
HB1185	NOWLIN	HEALTH/HOME CARE: Creates the Home- and Community-Based Long-Term Care Act
HB1198	KATZ	SOCIAL SERVICES DEPT: Provides for the transfer of functions of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services from the Department of Social Services to the Louisiana Workforce Commission and the Department of Health and Hospitals.
SB253	DORSEY	HEALTH CARE: Requires the Department of Health and Hospitals to disseminate information related to the provision of health care services.
SB257	MOUNT	SOCIAL SERVICES DEPT: Reorganizes and renames the Department of Social Services
SB295	DONAHUE	HEALTH/HOSPITALS DEPT: Authorizes the Department of Health and Hospitals to contract for the operation of state inpatient mental health facilities and certain Services provided at such facilities.
SB358	MCPHERSON	HEALTH CARE: Requires DHH to study and evaluate all possible models of care which seek to maximize the use of community hospitals for providing of acute and inpatient care currently being provided by the hospital system operated by LSU Health Sciences Center.
SB360	BROOME	HEALTH CARE: Extends the facility need review approval for licensed intermediate care facilities for people with developmental disabilities that are located in certain areas



- [SB391](#) [CHAISSON](#) FUNDS/FUNDING: Constitutional amendment to authorize limited redirection and transfer of funds supporting appropriations and allocations from the state general fund and dedicated funds in certain circumstances
- [SB392](#) [CHAISSON](#) FUNDS/FUNDING: Authorizes limited redirection and transfer of funds supporting appropriations and allocations from the state general fund and dedicated funds in certain circumstances.
- [SB463](#) [MICHOT](#) FUNDS/FUNDING: Constitutional amendment to authorize limited redirection and transfer of funds supporting appropriations and allocations from the state general fund and dedicated funds in certain circumstances.

As a member of GACDA and the DD Council, Kevin Hill has been an active participant of the legislative workgroup and is doing a great job of keeping us informed of any updates concerning the DD Council.

Our office has also recognized a concern regarding the 2010 Census. It was noted that there was no occasion to collect data pertaining to households with individuals with disabilities. With the absence of a means to identify citizens with disabilities in Louisiana, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs has created a Constituent Survey which will be distributed, via email across the state. We are compiling a distribution list to send out to citizens with disabilities as well as advocacy groups and/or organizations. The survey is comprised of approximately 26 questions which will provide vital information relative to citizens with disabilities and provides constituents the opportunity to articulate needs and will also serve as a resource for GODA to collect facts and data.

In lieu of the existing economic conditions and fiscal situation, there has been no movement on acquiring the Foundation Search project. The present budget freeze will not allow further action however we hope to revisit this resource should circumstances change.