

Issue 37 Summer 2017



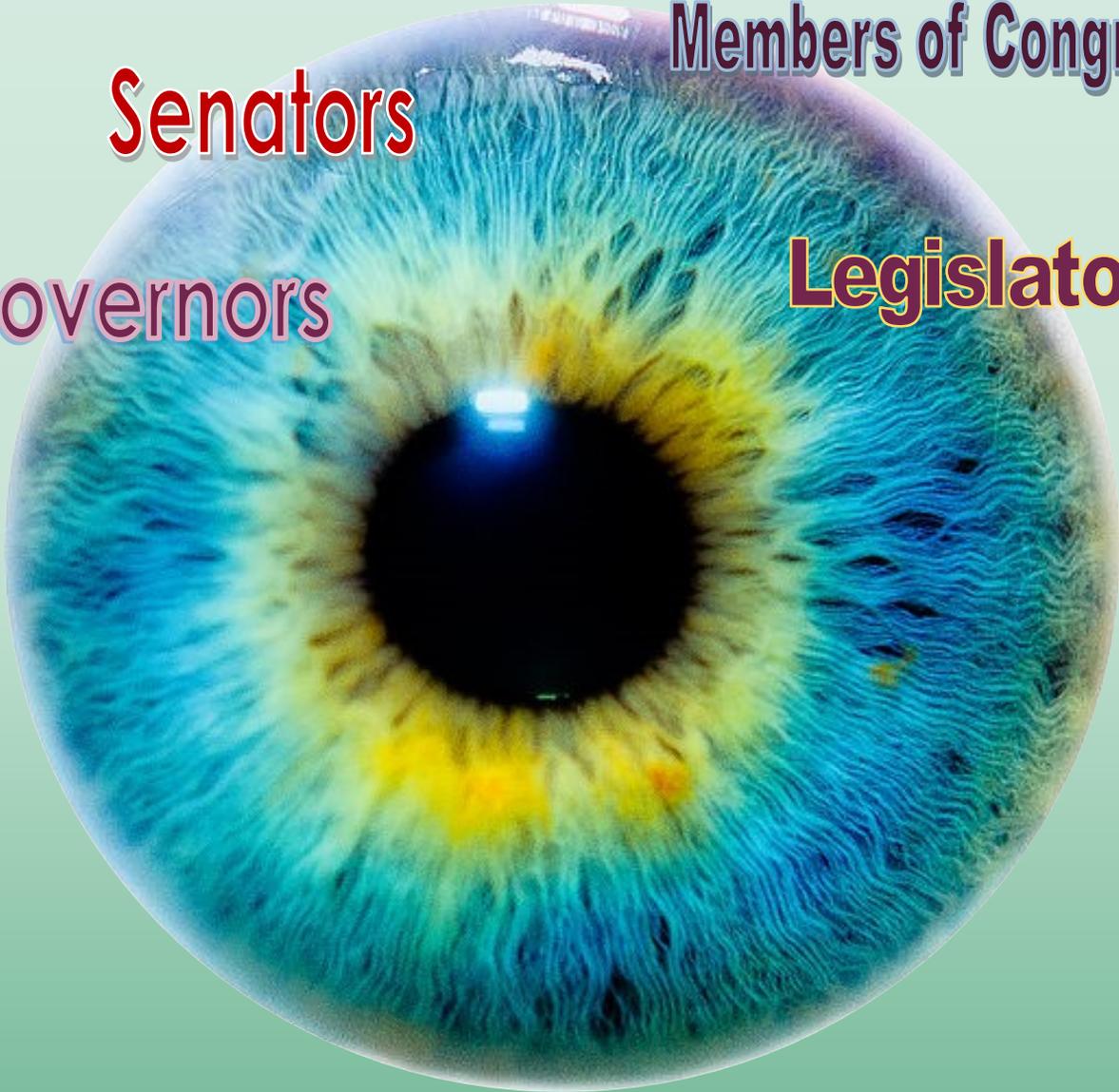
Mr. President

Members of Congress

Senators

Governors

Legislators



**WE ARE
WATCHING YOU!**



About the Riot...

The Riot is produced at Human Services Research Institute (HSRI). We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue. Without you, The Riot would not have a voice.

- Angela West ~ Virginia
- Matthew Shapiro ~ Virginia
- Michael Thornton ~ Arkansas
- Rebecca Voskeritchian ~ Virginia
- Garrett Brumfield ~ Virginia
- David Pinno ~ Wisconsin
- Kathy Bates ~ New Hampshire
- Shiloh Blackburn ~ Idaho
- Ian Bott ~ Idaho

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Join Us for a National Teleconference!

We Are Watching!



Save the Date
October 5, 2017



Hear from self-advocate leaders from around the country! Voice your opinion!

Get the details at

www.theriotrocks.org

We Are Watching

People with disabilities are worried about the future of their services and supports. People have gone to Washington, DC to fight against changes to the health care law. Some people were even arrested.

Cuts to public supports, like Medicaid, will mean major setbacks for people with disabilities and their families. That includes loss of support, independence, and jobs. This cannot happen on our watch!

The Riot has always been a resource for self-advocates to express

themselves and tell it like it is. For this issue of the Riot a group of self-advocate leaders from across the United States came together to set the line on issues that are most important to people with disabilities. We are paying attention to what is going on across the country. This Riot issue spells out our bottom lines on issues that are important to everyone.

We will host a **National Conversation** teleconference on this topic and in **later issues** of The Riot we will judge what policymakers have done. Did they make things better or worse? **We are watching!**



What We Are Watching

Mr. President, Senators, Members of Congress, Governors, and State Legislators - you are policymakers. You have the power to make good or bad decisions about services that people with disabilities need. You can help us live a good life in the community. That's what we want. Or, you can hurt us. You can make decisions that will cut our services and make it very hard for us.

We expect that you will make decisions to help us, not hurt us. We will tell you what we need you to do. Then later, we will judge the decisions you make. We are watching YOU. And we VOTE.



We will be watching to see what you do to make sure that people with disabilities:

- ◆ Are **heard and included** in helping to decide on the policies that affect them.
- ◆ Have opportunities to be **part of the community** just like everybody else.
- ◆ Have **access to good jobs**.
- ◆ Have the **opportunity to have loving relationships**. YES, romantic ones.
- ◆ Have **access to good healthcare**.
- ◆ Have **reliable, quality support workers**.

What does all this mean exactly? Keep reading to find out how self-advocates feel things are right now and what they expect in the future.

Heard and Included

We don't want others making decisions for us. The rallying cry of the self-advocacy movement is "Nothing about us, without us!" We want to have a say over our own lives and the supports we need. We want to be respected members of our communities.

What we expect YOU to do

- ✓ Make sure that we have opportunities to give advice about the services that affect us.
- ✓ Make sure that we have equal opportunities to serve on boards and committees that make decisions about us.



Part of the Community

It was not that long ago that people with disabilities were forced to live in large institutions, far away from their families and communities. For many years, we fought for the right to be included in community life. We cannot, and will not, go back.

What we expect YOU to do

- ✓ Make sure to keep the services we need to live in the community.
- ✓ Help us serve our communities and be seen as vital members of society.
- ✓ Make communities accessible to ALL members, including those with disabilities.



Access to Good Jobs

We want real jobs for real pay. Like other people, we want to make money to live and do things we enjoy. Some employment services focus on “placing” us in jobs instead of helping us find the jobs we really want. We don’t want to worry about losing our benefits if we make too much. We want a balance between pay and benefits, so that we can afford to live a good life with the support that we need.

What we expect YOU to do

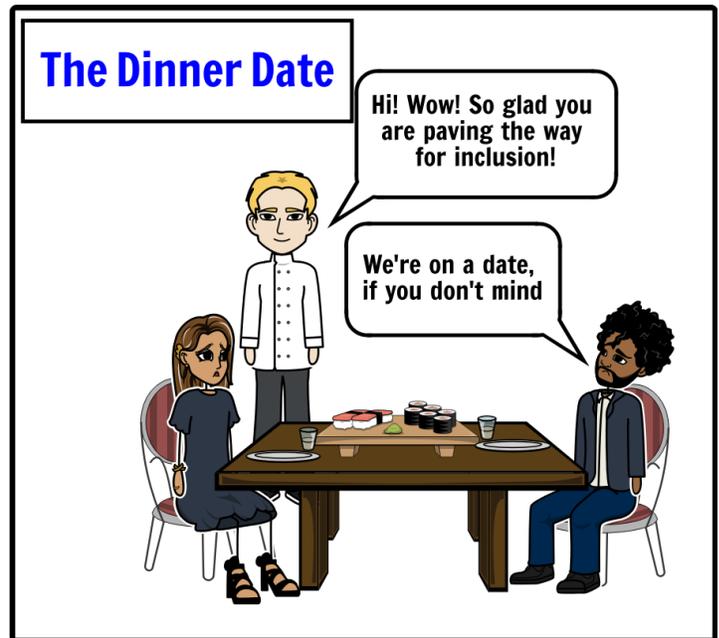
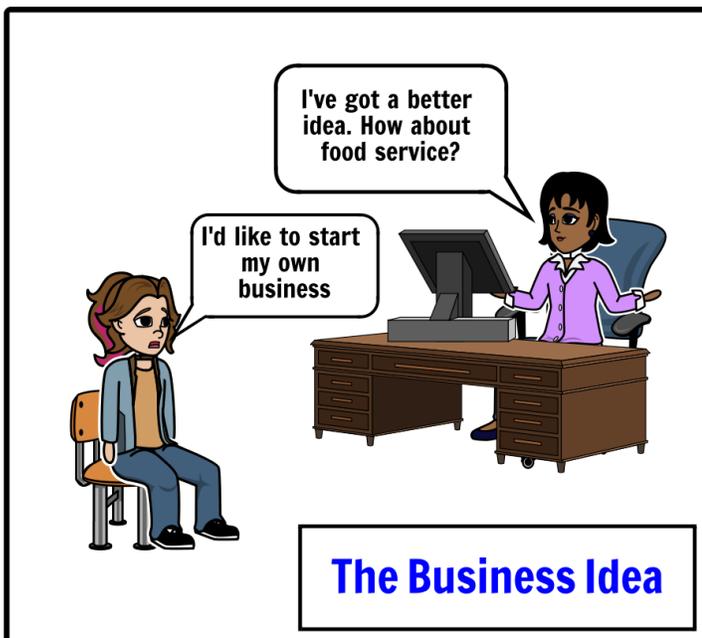
- ✓ Create more chances for us to get jobs.
- ✓ Make sure that service staff help us think outside the box, including self-employment.
- ✓ Make sure we have opportunities for job growth and promotions.

Loving Relationships

We have the same need for love, support, and connection as anyone else. We want to have friendships and romantic relationships. Some of us want to raise a family. Sometimes we just want to go on a date - like people do - without having to be an advocate all the time.

What we expect YOU to do

- ✓ Make sure we have the right to get married, if we want.
- ✓ Make sure we have access to relationship advice that is more than just being healthy and safe.
- ✓ Make sure we have the right and protection to become legal guardians of our own children or adoptive or foster children.



Rita has tried to get support to start her own business till she is **Blue in the Face!**



Do we even need to say it? OK, we will. We are **Blue in the Face** over this one.



Access to Good Health Care

Just like everyone else, we need to be able to go to the doctor, dentist, or mental health therapist. Guess what? Our reason may or may not be related to our disability. We need to feel welcome, and be able to make decisions about our own health care.

What we expect YOU to do

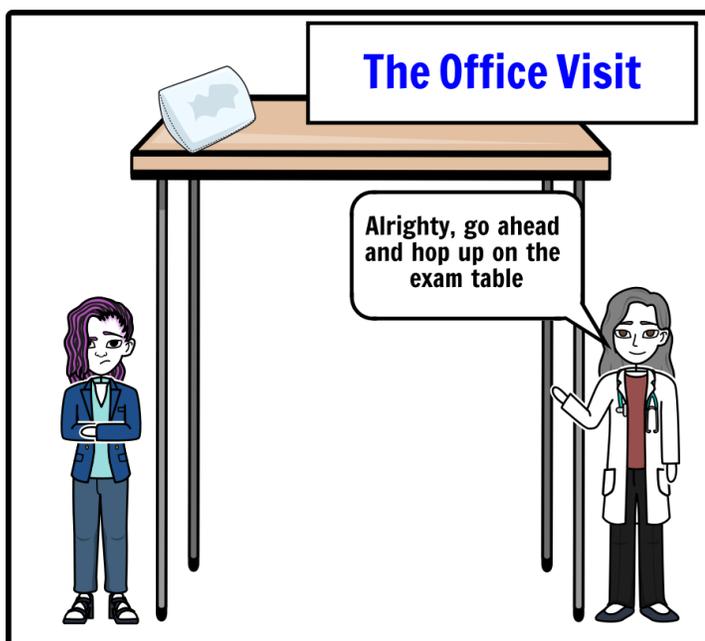
- ✓ Make sure we have access to health care. This means physical access, as well as respectful treatment by all medical staff.
- ✓ Make sure we have access to preventative care, such as mammograms and prostate screening.
- ✓ Help to make sure medical offices are accessible for us, including exam tables and other equipment.

Wages for Workers

Many of us rely on others to support us with activities in everyday life. When we find a good match with a support worker, we want to keep them around. But often, they get paid low wages and leave to find better-paying jobs. This means that we are always hiring and training new staff. This is a lot of effort and puts us at risk of not having the good quality supports that we need. Sometimes, that can be dangerous!

What we expect YOU to do

- ✓ Make sure we can find and keep reliable, quality support workers.
- ✓ Support workers must be able to have a career and earn a livable wage.



Seriously, this is what it's like for us. This definitely gets a **Blue in the Face**.



Looks like we'll be hiring and training new staff till we're **Blue in the Face**.



A Message for Advocates

By Angela West

There are people in leadership roles who do not fully understand how supports and services impact our lives. Or they choose to ignore it. It is time for us to make our mark for the benefit of the disability community.

I've heard some of you say that you are tired of saying the same thing year after year. You may ask yourself, "Is it worth it to keep fighting?" The answer is YES! Even though we've fought to get where we are today, it isn't over. The services and supports we rely on are not guaranteed.

Disability advocates in the past crawled up the Capitol steps to make their voices heard. It is our time to carry this mission with a new energy.



We must be **UNITED!**

Each person might feel strongly about a certain issue, but we have to be united in our underlying message. The message that we must be respected, have equal rights, and live to our fullest potential!

We must be **VISIBLE!**

Policymakers need to see our faces and hear our stories. When we are in front of them, they are more willing to listen. You don't have to go alone. There is strength in numbers. Going in a group shows that we are in this together and support each other.

We must be **WILLING** to share our stories!

Some policies or services make us seem like we are just another case to be "fixed." When we tell our stories, people will begin to see that our lives are just as important as anyone else's. Some of you might be weary of sharing your story over and over and feel like you're a broken record, but never forget that your story is unique and can have an impact each time you tell it.

We must **REMEMBER** that policymakers are people!

Sometimes, it feels like we are talking to high officials who don't really listen or think about us when they are making policy decisions. However, each policymaker has real emotions and a family that might be connected to the disability community somehow. We must show them how policies could impact them or their loved ones.

***Don't be afraid to lift up your voice.
Together, we can shape the future
for people with disabilities!***

Want to connect more with The Riot using Social Media?

Find us on Facebook, Twitter, and on our Riot website to read our Riot Briefs!

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/The-Riot-136359615280/>



Twitter

www.twitter.com/riotrocks

The Riot Brief

www.theriotrocks.org/the-riot-newsletter/riot-brief

Craig says... Paying Attention Stinks!



Every time I turn on the TV I see people shouting about health care. People go to Washington, DC. They think that the government is going to cut their health care services. They think that

maybe Medicaid will get cut so they protest. Some get arrested.

Medicaid. Medi-coo. Medi-kay. Medi- WHO CARES?



I don't care. Isn't there a baseball game I can watch? When does football season start? Can we watch a movie? I need some popcorn.

Yes, it's true. I have a doctor, a dentist, and a person who comes by to make sure I am okay. He helps me pay my bills, and makes sure I eat good food. I have another person who helps me with my job. I make my own decisions and they both help me speak up for myself.

What did you say? You said that all those people who help me are paid by MEDICAID? You said that Medicaid is money from the state and the federal government in Washington, DC? That's the money that pays them to help me?

And what? You said that if changes are made to the health care law that there could be changes to Medicaid? Even CUTS to Medicaid?

WAIT! You mean I can have my services cut? Or my friends can have their services cut? Now hold on just a minute. Is that what all of this shouting is about on TV?

I should pay more attention! This affects my life. It affects all our lives! Where do I sign up? I am going to skip that baseball game and movie now. You have my attention.

HEY! All of you making decisions about MY life.

I want you to know...

Craig is watching YOU now!



The Riot! turns 13 this month!

Help us celebrate by searching for some of the topics that we've covered over the years!



Make sure to look up and down to find the hidden words.

- ✓ Birthday
- ✓ Take charge
- ✓ Cubby
- ✓ Couch potato
- ✓ Craig
- ✓ Silly rules
- ✓ Vote
- ✓ Dating
- ✓ Freedom
- ✓ R-word
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Leaders
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ Real jobs
- ✓ Friendship



Riot Action Page

Speak Up and Speak Out!

Looking for ways to get involved? Here are a few Riot favorites.

✧ **Talk with your friends about what matters!**
Get your self-advocacy group together. Get the facts. Talk about what you learn. Get an opinion. Then... **decide to act.**

✧ **Get radical!** Check out ADAPT.
www.adapt.org Maybe you will want to work with them.

✧ **Stay in the know.** Follow ASAN.
www.autisticadvocacy.org

✧ **Host a coffee meeting.** Invite a group of friends over to talk to your local policymakers over cookies and coffee.

Find out who your senators and representatives are here:

www.house.gov/representatives/

www.senate.gov/senators/contact/

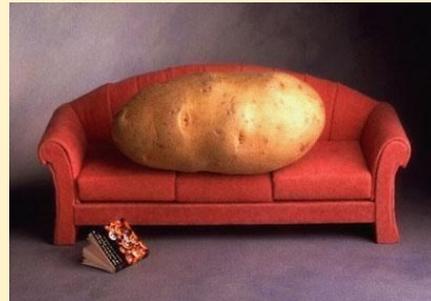
✧ **Make a call.** Call your local representatives and share what's most important to you.

✧ **Connect online.** Scroll through social media sites. Find or start a hashtag. Here are a few favs:

- #SaveMedicaid
- #FreeOurPeople
- #DisabilityPride

✧ **Print and share.** Print the last page of this Riot issue and share with others!

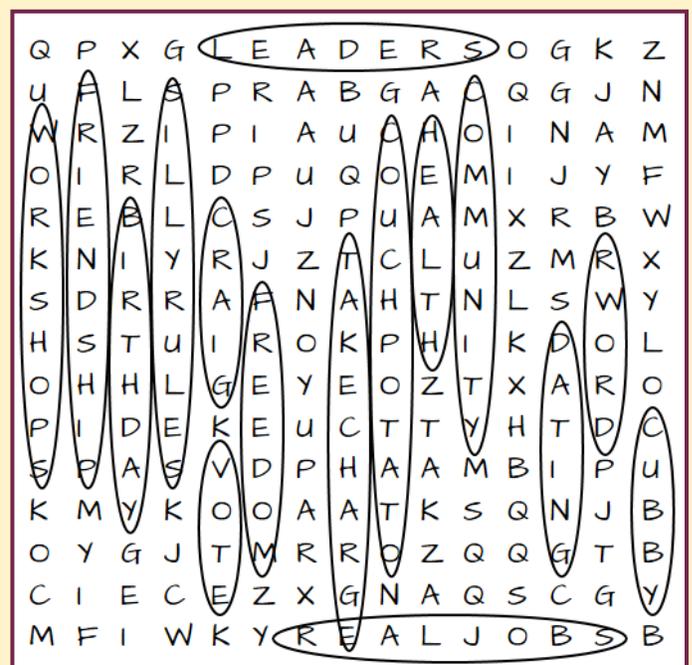
Don't Be a Couch Potato!



Talk it up... Take Action! Have yourselves a regular Riot!!!



Puzzle Answers





A Message from People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are speaking up for equal rights and access to all aspects of community life. Some need support, and those supports may come from family, friends, communities, and public services.

If you are a policymaker or community member and want to ensure people with disabilities have the support and freedom to live the lives they want, here's what YOU can do.

Include People with Disabilities in Decisions

- ✓ Make sure that we have the chance to give advice about the policies that affect us.
- ✓ Make sure that we have equal opportunities to serve on decision-making committees.

Include People with Disabilities in the Community

- ✓ Make sure to keep the services we need to live in the community.
- ✓ Help us serve our communities and be seen as vital members of society.
- ✓ Make communities accessible to ALL members, including those with disabilities.

Make Sure People with Disabilities Have Access to Good Jobs

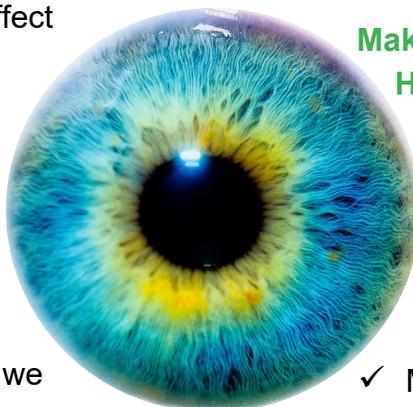
- ✓ Create more chances for us to get jobs.
- ✓ Make sure that service staff help us think outside the box, including self-employment.
- ✓ Make sure we have opportunities for job growth and promotions.

Protect the Rights of People with Disabilities to Have Loving Relationships

- ✓ Make sure we have the right to get married.
- ✓ Make sure we can get advice about relationships that is more than just being healthy and safe.
- ✓ Make sure we get the support we need to make our own decisions. We have the right and protection to become legal guardians of our own children or adoptive or foster children.

Make Sure People with Disabilities Have Access to Good Quality Health Care

- ✓ Make sure we have access to health care. This means physical access, as well as respectful treatment.
- ✓ Make sure we have access to preventative care, such as mammograms and prostate screening.
- ✓ Help to make sure medical offices are accessible for us, including exam tables and other equipment.



Support Good Wages for Workers

- ✓ Make sure we can find and keep reliable, quality support workers.
- ✓ Support workers must be able to have a career and earn a livable wage.

The People

Self-Advocate Voices in Action

“As a passionate self advocate that strives for positive social change, my big issues are Medicaid, employment and home support. These go hand-in-hand. Without Medicaid, I couldn't have done stuff at home, worked, or had people that I could advocate for with these challenges. I hope to continue to have positive social changes.”

~ Ian Bott

“I hope that we can forward this to people in D.C. and not just our allies. I think we had a very important discussion and the issue lays out how these services and supports really allow us to be a member of society.”

~ Angela West

“I would like to see this issue reach and educate as many people possible about the large systemic challenges that still face people with disabilities. We have to begin to break down some of these systemic barriers in order for people with disabilities to be seen on the same level as any other minority in our country. They are often thought about as afterthoughts and that needs to be addressed.”

~ Matthew Shapiro



“Aside from the systematic changes that need to occur for those with disabilities, I would hope that our efforts change the general perceptions society has about those of us with disabilities as well.

Able-bodied individuals need to understand that despite our unique challenges, we have the same basic desires as they do. If more would listen to understand, as opposed to simply listening to respond, then we would be able to create change not only on paper, but in hearts and minds as well.”

~ Garrett Brumfield

“I really want the president and legislature to understand that disability never discriminates, it's part of every culture and every society. It's the only minority that anyone can join at any time. People who experience disabilities must be given the opportunity to live up to their full potential. For many of us this means we need to employ our own direct support staff in order to work and participate in community life. If you don't care about my Direct Support Workers, then you really don't care about me.”

~ Kathy Bates