



Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council
A Governor Appointed Disability Rights Leadership Organization

Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council

207 House Avenue, Suite 107, Room 14

Camp Hill, PA 17011

Phone: 717-364-1732

Fax: 717-236-8800

Website: www.pasilc.org

**Joint PA House Human Services and Tourism & Recreational
Development Committees**

Travel Issues for People with Disabilities – May 15, 2019

Good morning. We are from the Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council, also known as PA SILC. Our organization works with the 17 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in PA, with Pennsylvania Council on Independent Living (PCIL, <http://thepecil.org/>) and the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL, <https://www.ncil.org/>). On transportation issues, we are a member of the Pennsylvania Transportation Alliance, an ad hoc group that group that was instrumental in getting the Person With Disabilities (PWD) Shared Ride program expanded across Pennsylvania. PA SILC also participates in the Disability Budget Coalition (DBC) and Keystone Transportation Funding Coalition (KTFC, <https://keystonetransportation.org/>). Our transportation, travel and community life efforts focus on supporting more accessible and affordable options for all people with disabilities in rural, urban and suburban areas.

In offering testimony, let us offer the following areas that the Governor and Pennsylvania Legislature can impact through budget and policy matters:

- The governor's office can provide directives to state agencies under his jurisdiction to ensure that all state owned properties, particularly areas of tourism and disability services are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We understand that there may be related budget costs but in many instances, they could be included in as new updates are done for properties. Updates should address issues for individuals with physical accessibility issues but also persons with blindness/visual disabilities, deaf/ hard of hearing and who are deaf-blind. It is also worth noting access for strollers is not the same as ADA accessibility. Some areas include:

- **State Parks**
- **Governor Office-Regional Locations**
- **State Capitol**
- **Historic Properties Owned by Pennsylvania Government.** Too often, we hear this used as a reason why buildings cannot be made accessible which is not a legitimate excuse.
- **Any properties or services under Pennsylvania Tourism.**
- **Local communities-** continue to do curb cuts and ensure that members of the disability community are involved so that ADA updates are done in a satisfactory manner.
- **State incentives for non-profits and businesses to become ADA compliant that operate areas under tourism.**
- **Increase number of accessible parking spots, including the Capitol here and elsewhere in Pennsylvania, particularly in areas related to tourism.**

- **Improve and Increase Transportation Options for People with Disabilities-both public and private options. Limited available of accessible transportation options for early mornings, evenings, weekends and holidays. Para-transit runs limited hours in most locations. Transportation Networking Companies (TNCs) offer limited Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) in Philadelphia but not in the rest of Pennsylvania. The majority of Amtrak stations in Pennsylvania and elsewhere are not accessible so that individuals using wheelchairs or scooters can board and ride. Some rail stations for SEPTA and PAT still have accessibility issues. Accessible options for ships and boats are also ongoing challenges here.**
- **Para-transit lifts- many were designed in accordance with the 1990s manual wheelchairs. Both power wheelchairs and larger individuals call for raising the weight thresholds for lifts up to 1000 pounds.**

Below are also additional areas that we heard from CILs from across Pennsylvania. We realize that accessibility for some areas noted below are more difficult but worth noting:

- **Air Travel Issues:** Some individuals have experienced invasive searches during airport checks. Improper handling of Durable Medical Equipment (DME) by airline and airport staffs is an ongoing issue: wheel chairs and other DME tend to frequently damaged to point of needing replaced. Airline laboratories are often not accessible. Inflight communications are often not accessible for those who are deaf and /or blind or deaf-blind, including inflight entertainment.
- **Museums:** Some older locations tend to have accessibility issues.
- **State and Community Parks, Trails:** Gravel sections tend to problematic for individuals in wheelchairs to navigate.
- **Caves:** This is usually not an accessible option for individuals in wheelchairs but an area of tourism for Pennsylvania.

- Government offices: There are still many organizations, including government offices that are not accessible to people in wheelchairs or scooters, even 29 years after the ADA, including office related to tourism and travel.

In making changes, we seek to greater inclusion of the disability community without diminishing the unique experiences of all tourists and travelers.

One final recommendation-Work with CILs on Disability Travel Issues:
We suggest that state government work with the CILs on addressing ADA and related travel issues. Too often, we hear that locations are considered 'accessible', but when someone with accessibility needs goes to use it, it does not work. Through collaboration with Pennsylvania's 17 CILs, access can be improved for all

Matt will share some personal comments on disability travel challenges (noted in a separate attachment).

Thank you for taking the time to consider our comments.