

Have you signed the VOR Choice Petition yet? More than 2,500 individuals from across the country have. Join them, sign the online petition, show strong and growing support for CHOICE. Visit, <http://www.vor.net> and click on the Petition link on the home page.

VOR Weekly E-Mail Update
June 26, 2009

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Success in Washington, D.C.!

1. Success! VOR's Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative

? WASHINGTON INITIATIVE UPDATE
*including a list of current H.R. 1255 cosponsors

? ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE

2. VOR seeks volunteers for its national Committees: Interest Form for your review and use is included in this Update. Deadline is July 10, 2009.

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1. Success! VOR's Annual Meeting and Washington Initiative

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WASHINGTON INITIATIVE UPDATE
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During the week of June 15, nearly 80 Initiative Participants hand-carried VOR's legislative positions to EVERY Congressional Office. Together, we covered 535 offices in about 3 days.

VOR primary legislative issue was H.R. 1255. Securing H.R. 1255 cosponsors was our main goal. We succeeded, big time. The numbers tell the story:

- * Before VOR's Washington Initiative, H.R. 1255 had 28 cosponsors.
- * During the week of VOR's Initiative, we gained 10 more.
- * The week after VOR's Initiative, we gained 7 more.

As of today, June 26, 2009, we are up to 45 COSPONSORS - a jump of a remarkable 17 new cosponsors in less than 2 weeks. The Debriefing Reports, including written evaluations by participants, indicate that there are many, many more cosponsors to come.

How you can help

Even with the hard work of being in D.C. and walking the Halls of Congress behind them, Washington Initiative participants (nearly 80 strong) continue to work hard following up with their state Congressional delegations.

Now, we need your help!

A list of cosponsors follows. If your Congressman is NOT on the list, please call him/her, share the updated cosponsor list, and --

A. Ask your U.S. Representative to COSPONSOR H.R. 1255. To find contact information for your Representative, visit <http://www.congress.org>. For background information about H.R. 1255, visit <http://vor.net/HR1255positions.htm>.

B. Request a meeting with your Elected Representative in his/her DISTRICT office in August. During all of August, your Representative will be back in your state working from his/her District offices. August will be an ideal time to secure a meeting to discuss, face-to-face, the importance of H.R.1255.

[A formal Action Alert will be sent regarding August District visits very soon. It is NOT too early to request an appointment in the District for August].

THANK YOU FOR HELP!

H.R. 1255 Cosponsors (as of June 26, 2009)

Sponsor: Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA)

COSPONSORS

Democrats

Rep. James Moran (D-VA)*
Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN)*
Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-PA)*
Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)*
Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA)
Rep. John Olver (D-MA)
Rep. John Barrow (D-GA)
Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL)
Rep. John Larson (D-CT)
Rep. James McGovern (D-MA)
Rep. Pete Stark (D-CA)
Rep. Charles Gonzalez (D-TX)
Rep. John Lewis (D-GA)
Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)
Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA)
Rep. Bobby Rush (D-IL)
Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)
Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA)
Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD)
Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI)
Rep. Richard Neal (D-MA)

Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL)
Rep. Al Green (D-TX)

Republicans

Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX)*
Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX)*
Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)*
Rep. David Dreier (R-CA)*
Rep. Daniel Lungren (R-CA)*
Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA)
Rep. John Culberson (R-TX)
Rep. Charles Boustany (R-LA)
Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL)
Rep. John Boozman (R-AR)
Rep. Anh "Joseph" Cao (R-LA)
Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ)
Rep. Pete Olson (R-TX)
Rep. Judy Biggert (R-IL)
Rep. Gary Miller (R-CA)
Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-KY)
Rep. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
Rep. Michael Burgess (R-TX)
Rep. Phil Gingrey (R-GA)
Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA)
Rep. Sam Johnson (R-TX)
Rep. Steve King (R-IA)
*=Original cosponsors

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ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE
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Nearly 100 advocates from across the country attended VOR's Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. on June 13.

Attendees received an inspiring talk from seasoned grassroots advocate and Beltway strategist, Michael Manganiello, a self-described "underdog." He provided to VOR valuable lessons learned from his more than 25 years of experience leading grassroots causes to greater visibility and marked successes.

VOR Annual Meeting participants also had the opportunity to provide input to Dr. Susan Daniels who is conducting federally-funded research for the National Council on Disability (NCD) on the effectiveness of the DD Act. This listening session provided attendees a valuable opportunity to share insights and concerns about the practices of DD Act programs in their own states.

The Annual Meeting concluded with a panel discussion relating to the national trend to do away with the word "retarded" and even "mental retardation." The panelists and audience members alike agreed, of course, that the use of "retarded" in any form in a derogatory way was completely

unacceptable and must be challenged whenever heard. That said, there was strong consensus that "mental retardation" was an important descriptor and diagnosis that tied closely to eligibility for life-sustaining services and provided clarity to our advocacy on behalf of a very specific population.

In addition to the speakers, the entire event fostered a sense of synergy and empowerment that can only be leveraged when so many like-minded advocates convene in one place. Although the State Reports (heard during a formal session the evening before the Annual Meeting) and countless sidebars throughout the weekend confirmed that choice is still squarely under attack across the country, learning from other advocates and speakers, provided a sense of empowerment that left participants feeling energized.

**2. VOR seeks volunteers for its national Committees:
Interest Form for your review and use is included in this Update.
Deadline is July 10, 2009.**

July 1, 2009

Dear VOR Member:

As you know, the strength of our organization rests on the time, talent and ingenuity of our board and committee members, with much of the work getting done by VOR's committees.

VOR has a number of standing committees, and we'd like to make sure that you have the opportunity to indicate your interest to serve on the committee(s) that reflects your interests and availability.

Please fill out attached committee assignment request form, and return it to VOR by sending it to rsims23@aol.com or faxing it to 973-893-9671 by July 10. By August 1, I hope to have completed all committee assignments for the coming year.

Thank you for taking an active role in VOR.

Best regards,

Robin Sims

VOR President

Committee Request Form

Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail address: _____

INTEREST / APPLICATION FORM

Return by JULY 10, 2009 TO:

rsims23@aol.com or faxing it to 973-893-9671

Please rank in order of preference:

____ Membership Committee. This committee is responsible for increasing the number of organization and individual members and retaining members. It works with VOR's Director of Resource Development and meets by teleconference as needed, with additional communication between meetings, preferably by e-mail.

____ Finance Committee. This committee works with the Director of Resource Development to plan and conduct, or provide for, fund raising projects or other means of financial support that will furnish the income needed to finance VOR's activities. It meets by teleconference as needed, with additional communication between meetings, preferably by e-mail.

____ Governmental Affairs Committee. This committee reviews proposed legislation, rules and regulations to determine the probable effects of proposed changes, additions and/or deletions to previous statutes or regulations upon the lives of persons with mental retardation. Upon such review it advises the Board of Directors, the Legislative Committee and/or the membership, as appropriate and necessary. The committee helps plan and carry out VOR policies and positions with respect to developments in such areas. This Committee works with VOR's Director of Government Relations and Advocacy and meets by teleconference as needed, with additional communication between meetings, preferably by e-mail.

____ Legislative Committee. This committee monitors legislation that affects persons with mental retardation as it proceeds through Congress and organizes membership response, including Washington Initiatives, Action Alerts, and other such activities, as the Committee deems necessary and appropriate. This Committee works with VOR's Director of Government Relations and Advocacy and meets by monthly.

____ Legal Affairs Committee. This committee keeps abreast of litigation that may affect the rights of persons with mental retardation and their families and endeavors to assist in the representation of the interests of such persons. This committee shall consist of attorneys across the country willing to assist VOR. This Committee operates via as needed communication via e-mail. Meetings are not regularly held.

In addition to these standing Committees, VOR also has Executive, Nominating and Advisory Board. These committee member are elected by the VOR Board, and in the case of Executive and

Nominating, members are Board Members. Please let us know if you would be interested in serving on the -

_____Advisory Board: Newly organized, the Advisory Board consists of persons who have special expertise with respect to the mission of VOR and can be called upon to provide assistance when needed.

_____VOR's Board of Directors.

Update Editor: Tamie Hopp, VOR Director of Government Relations & Advocacy

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

TO JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE: \$25 per individual, \$150 per family organization, or \$200 per provider/professional organization. Extra donations are welcome!

You may pay by check or credit card
VOR (Voice of the Retarded)
836 S. Arlington Heights Rd., #351
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
847-253-0675 fax (for referrals or credit card payments)
Tamie327@hotmail.com (for referrals or credit card payments)

Name

Address (if paying by credit card, use billing address). All forms must include complete address including zip code)

City St Zip

Phone Fax

E-Mail

Family/Professional Organization Affiliation (if applicable)

If paying by credit card, please provide the following information:

Amount to charge to card: \$_____

Card Type: _____ Mastercard _____ Visa

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Cardholder's Signature: _____

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