

Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy HAVA Summary Report Fiscal Year 2005

The Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy (WCA) was awarded \$70,000 to work on voting rights issues in Wisconsin during FY 2005 (October 2004 to September 2005). With the funding, WCA has advanced our voting rights objectives for people with disabilities in Wisconsin. Below is a short summary of our accomplishments.

Systems Advocacy

- ✓ Provided written and oral testimony on bills that would require a state issued photo identification to register and to vote (AB 63 and SB 42).
- ✓ Supported bill AB 542, which would make changes to the administration of elections without requiring photo identification.
- ✓ Participated as an active member of the Voting Rights Coalition.
- ✓ Partnered with the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) and the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living (WCILC) on legislative and other systemic voting-related issues.
- ✓ Followed the activities of the Joint Legislative Council Special Committee on Election Law Review, and provided feedback regarding considered changes to current election law.
- ✓ Educated a number of municipal clerks about voting rights, working with people with disabilities, the importance of accessible voting machines, and the number of voters with disabilities in their region.
- ✓ Continued to partner with the Wisconsin Council on Developmental Disabilities (WCDD) on the *WI Disability Vote: 2004* initiative.

Individual Advocacy

- ✓ Served about sixty (60) people with disabilities through individual advocacy and information and referral.

Outreach/Get out the vote (GOTV)

- ✓ Presented to the Wisconsin Psychiatry Network via teleconference; a mental health consumer group and providers of consumers; and the Point Brain Injury support group about advocacy and voting rights.
- ✓ Briefed the Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Groups regarding our activities during the fall of 2004.
- ✓ Registered over 350 people from the disability community to vote and/or apply for an absentee ballot through our voter registration mail campaign.
- ✓ Registered 174 people to vote through in-person voter registration tables.

- ✓ Staffed or provided technical assistance to 21 organizations on how to register people to vote and apply for absentee ballots.
- ✓ Reminded 13,500 people within the disability community to vote, of our toll free hotline, and of their voting rights through another mail campaign in October 2004.
- ✓ Created a database of 359 people who were interested in receiving additional information about voting related topics.
- ✓ Raised awareness and advertised WI Disability Vote: 2004 through six (6) television interviews, five (5) newspaper articles, and three (3) radio spots.
- ✓ Staffed a toll free voting rights line during poll hours on election days and business hours throughout the rest of the year.
- ✓ Provided transportation grants to Central Survival Coalition in Stevens Point and Mr. Mom's Transportation in Madison to take people with disabilities to the polls on November 2, 2004. Eighteen (18) people were transported.

Other Activities

- ✓ Recruited volunteers from the disability community to conduct 133 physical accessibility surveys of polling locations throughout the state.
 - Found 75% of the 133 polling sites had one or more physical accessibility barrier.
 - Determined that a vast majority of access problems related to accessible parking, an identified accessible route to the building or voting room, stairs or other barriers, and excessively heavy doors.
- ✓ Worked with the City of Milwaukee to address problems with the accessibility of many of their polling sites.
 - Analyzed Milwaukee polling place survey data and created a report entitled: "Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy Physical Accessibility Summary for the City of Milwaukee Elections Commission."
 - Presented our report to the City of Milwaukee Election Task Force.
 - Met with the City of Milwaukee five (5) times regarding our concerns, including a tour of multiple polling sites to educate and identify access barriers.

Collaboration with the State

- ✓ Served on the Election Administration Council and evaluated and provided feedback to the State Elections Board (SEB) on accessible voting machines.
- ✓ Met with the SEB monthly to give and receive updates on voting activities throughout the state.
- ✓ Advertised SEB events to the disability community. Offered stipends to attend some of the events.