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INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION - UMASS BOSTON
POLICY TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO SHARE YOUR VOICE
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Live captioner standing by.

>> Hey, everyone, we are just getting ready. As always, there has to be a little excitement. We are working through technical things. Rylin, you hear me? I just promoted you -- okay, great! Great.

>> I'm having trouble getting our web camera turn -- it's not letting me select it.

>> Try now.

>> Ta-dah!

>> Yeah!

>> Thank you. That was stressful.

>> I'm sure. So we are very excited.

>> Liz, it's not letting me change -- do you want to come over and do this one together.

>> This will be recorded. This one together.

>> I'm not going to start recording until we start talking for real. So just give us a second to get going.

>> It will definitely be recorded and you will find it on our website and we will e-mail it out to you.

>> We are getting there, I promise.

>> No worries. Everyone here are your friends or will be by the end of this webinar. So we are good. I will go on camera, too. And I can greet people. Hello, people. While we are getting settled, I can tell you that this is Rebecca Lazo with Think College. And we are just getting the PowerPoint set up. You're going to advance your own slides, is that right, Rylin?

>> Yes, it -- Rylin?

>> It says you just turned off my ability to share screen.

>> Nope, I don't think I did that. I hit escape.

>> Thank you, Mark for saying the video looks good. Very good. Are you able to share now?S in one more try and go back to a backup plan --

>> Sure.

>> If we fail at this miserably today.

>> We aren't failing. We are doing it a different way. Thank you everyone for being patient. While Rylin and I are trying to work this out and Liz, I will just say again I'm Rebecca Lazo. We are a national organization dedicated to developing, expanding and including inclusive higher education option for students with intellectual disability. With us today are Liz Weintraub and Rylin Rodgers from the association free university centers on disability. And the webinar they are presenting is policy tools you can use to share your voice. Liz and Rylin have been out and about in the United States traveling recently. I'm glad they had a chance to join us today. And I will be here to answer questions and sort of help keep things moving along. If you have any technical needs throughout the webinar or questions for the panelists you can put them in the chat box here in Zoom. If anyone has a need for captions, I just put in a link in the chat box to access live captions. And the presentation and handouts

are at this other address link to our website. Rylin, how are you? What can I do?

>> It looks like -- I'm going to try one more time. And what do you see?

>> I see you.

>> Well, that's charming but not what we were hoping for.

>> I can share then.

>> So the last try -- Oh!
There you go.

>> Ta-dah! So thank you so much for everybody being patient. I will ask my colleague to lean in here because we want to both say hello.

>> Hello. I'm Liz Weintraub. So --

>> Rebecca will let us know if there is any other pre-conversation we need to have or like us to jump in after this painful wait for everyone.

>> I don't think so. I think we are good. Before you get to talking, how about if we take a quick poll to see who is here today and then you will be able to gauge your presentation a little better so I put two questions up on the screen. One, have you previously attended a Think College webinar. And two, kind of who you are so we know whether you are a family or an individual with disability policy maker, et cetera.

Mark turner is asking if you can close the blinds behind you.

>> I will do my best and you get to watch.

>> Looks like almost everyone has taken the poll. If anyone wants to chime in, I will give you ten more seconds and we will let our presenters get going.

>> All right, mark, we gave it a try.

>> It worked. Thumbs up and thumbs down. I'm sharing the results so everyone can see that the majority of the folks on the

call today are from higher ed or policy maker or advocate is how they identify themselves. All right, Liz and Rylin, take it away.

>> Liz Weintraub. I'm Liz Weintraub, by the way. I'm a self-advocate. I'm an advocate with a disability. I'm a wife. There is a picture of me and my husband. I'm a daughter. On the left is a picture of me and my family. My sisters and my dad. And on top right or left, I don't know. Is a picture of my mother and the reason why she is not in the bottom picture is that she passed away right before that picture was taken. And last but not least is I'm a friend I think to all -- I try to be a friend to all.

>> Liz, what is your title here?

>> I'm policy advocate -- policy advocate.

>> Yes, you are the senior policy advocate and you work on the policy team and get to work on -- and you will hear more about Liz's role as an advocate related to higher ed as we go on.

I'm Rylin and I get to work with Liz. I'm the director of public policy here. I come to this work from my previous work where I was a director of training at a leadership education and developmental disability interdisciplinary training program in the state of Indiana. I share that because I thought you might be interested in learning more about the program in your state. And I come to this work as person with a disability. I'm dyslexic, I'm the mom of two young adults who identifies as having disabilities. And it really helps me frame my perspective as a family advocate and personal advocate and thrilled to get to work on policy.

>> And who are you? You are all agents of change and this picture -- this picture is of people climbing, walking and crawling up the capital steps just when they were -- Americans with Disabilities Act which will be 30 years old and so I think this is very exciting. But in this picture is people with disabilities, families and professionals. That's all who you are. And I think if we all worked together we will achieve more. I like to say together everyone. So there.

>> We like this picture because it reminds us of the history of advocacy and big successes that have happened in the disability

and civil rights space and how so many voices were involved. It's great to see on the phone today many of the types of people are reflected in our conversation.

So we really wanted to stop and take a big step back and sort of -- we hope make the case about why being an advocate and engaging in advocacy around higher education options and access to higher ed for individuals with disabilities is important and why you are needed. The number one important piece is that you have expertise. We really want you to come away from this conversation today and take a moment to claim your expertise. Liz and I have the privilege of getting to spend a lot of time in meetings here in Washington talking to policy makers and their staff. And there are very few people that have any kind of lived experience either running a program that serves students with intellectual or other disabilities. Being a student in a program. Have a family experience. There is not a lot of first hand knowledge. So the fact that you're engaged and interested really defines you as an expert in the space so we hope that you will claim your expertise and really use that as a way to move forward.

The other important piece that I think we know about more in the disabilities space than maybe some other advocacy ideas is that our lives and our work are really impacted by policy makers' decisions. We all know that the systems and services that touch our work or the people that we care most about are influenced by what policy makers decide is important and how they want to move things forward. It's really a -- forward. It's a chance to connect the dots between what's happening in your community and what's happening in and how we can make that work. Another piece we talk about and we talk several times about is voting. And how the fact that we are all voters and have the ability to hold policy makers accountable. I think it's an important point because I often hear people who say the reason I don't get involved is the people who represent me are not -- they don't share my values. They are not who I voted for. And actually I think that's all the more reason to get involved. We need to make sure that people aren't in an echo chamber. They -- echo chambers. You voted for the person or voted for the other candidate, they still took an oath of office and they are there to represent you. You have a role in holding them accountable.

And the last point is really important. Again, Liz and I get the capitol quite often and those halls are pretty busy there

are a lot of people there making a lot of visits and speaking up on issues. So if we don't join the conversation, other people's voices will be making the decisions. So it's really our chance to raise the issue.

>> There are three things to do. One -- and they are equally as important for -- equally as important. One is contact your legislators. They will talk about who to know. But legislators are one group of people that are really important to know and legislators are senators and representatives. Get informed, informed yourself through newspapers, the news, TV, but it's still important to know what's going on out there and how to make legislation, and what's going on in the policy. And then the third step is getting registered to vote. I hope that everyone has had the chance to register. If you haven't still register because next year is the election of the President and that's who you -- the President is the one that you will have a say in what's going on and will talk about later.

>> So in order to take a little bit of a moment because you are engaged in the process already, you are involved in getting informed and we will talk about what's happening in Washington and what we are seeing at the federal level so you can be thinking about who you represent, and who you can influence. It's often hard like Liz was saying to take in all of that information that's out there about politics. The news can be overwhelming. Sometimes it's helpful to take a big step back and say what's really happening right now. A couple of things to know about what's happening right now is that we have a divided Congress. And that means that one of the sides, the house is under the control of the Democrats. They have the majority. And then on the other side the senate have control by the Republicans. So this creates a situation where people have to agree both Republicans and Democrats for some things to move forward. That's a really sort of tricky piece in terms of making sure that we are advocating across all aisles and really having good conversations. It's also a really important piece because disability is one issue that impacts everyone. It's not a Democratic issue. It's not a Republican issue. It cuts through every community. Every socioeconomic class, every gender identity. Every ethnic background and race really disability is about all of us and so some ways it's an issue that we can really work to bring people together on. Having said that, it is fair to talk about that right now things are pretty divided. It's hard to get people who to work together and there is a lot of

blaming each other and really not working well or communicating well. So it's fair to know that. And if you think about sometimes policy is a long-term project so the relationships I'm working on now might be more important for the future because right now things are just tough. One of the other things that's real and happening now is we have a very unconventional presidential administration. The way information is being shared from the White House, the way policy decisions are coming, some of that is happening via social media. There is a lot of coverage of what's happening in Twitter. That's very different. It's also a very different experience for Congress. They are not used to having a negotiation partner with the White House that works in this style. So every time we all know that when something is new or different or not what we are used to, it's hard.

So it's fair to say that is the style of this President, had created challenges for Congress working well with the President.

Then it's fair to talk about what's happening right now. The effort to look at impeachment which will be a really complicated process because it could lead to a trial in the senate. Creates even greater stress for people working well together and really communicating. And also takes a lot of energy. A lot of the time that spent that could be spent on other issues is being spent on that right now. It's important to know those pieces. And then the other piece because that's not enough complication in Washington. We have to add extra is that we are in the middle already of a very intense campaign for the next election. As Liz mentioned, in 2020 we will vote on who will be the President of the next term. We also in the same time frame will vote for every member of the house. And for some of the members of the senate and many of you will be looking at the state governor's races. The other piece about that is the people running for those offices are in office now. When you are busy trying to get the next job or keep your current job it changes what you focus on. There is a lot going on in Washington. It can feel overwhelming. Maybe even a little discouraging. But I think it's a helpful to think about the big picture and long-term of what we are trying to do is build relationships.

This is a picture to give you a look at where we are. Because we spend a lot of time talking about we are divided and different majorities. If you start each of those dots represent somebody. So on the 435, that's the house side. So you see that 235 Democrats are the blue dots. 197 Republicans are the red

dot. And then one independent and two vacancies are the clear dots. If you look at the pictures of those dots it's closer to half and half and a lot of -- there are a lot of dots in each category so knowing there are a lot of people to talk to and there is a chance to really impact all of those.

Same picture on the senate side. We are at 45 and 52. The senate has a little bit of a different way of doing math. There is 100 senators so you would think that a majority would be 51. You need 51 to decide and clearly Republicans have 52. But most things to move to the senate actually takes 60 senators because that's the way they count sort of the math of moving something forward and you can see that would take some bipartisan cooperation. So I think it's helpful to look at those pictures and realize all of those dots are people and we have a chance to communicate.

>> We think it's really important to know and then there are some people that are just good to know. And I will go over -- the least things that's really important. I will never say -- you are the best judge of yourself, but these are the people. So we think are probably the most important ones. We hope that you would follow our direction which is the President and he fund -- signs those into law. He is the one that will be up for re-election next year. The governor in your state and some of them might be up for re-election, and then the last three are really important which is both of your senators and your representatives on the federal level and your representatives and your senator on the state level.

>> We like to think big picture in terms of who is making decisions that might impact who you care about and the education space and the work force space it's the federal branch to the senators and representatives and then things are happening at your state level. The -- state level. The great thing is think about our messaging and get a lot of bang for our buck and share what we are learning and what we know about higher ed and what we care about with both our senators and representatives and our governor and state representative. It's a chance to take what you are knowing. Liz mentioned who you should know. We wanted to do -- well, first of all -- sorry. I'm a little confused. We wanted to do a little bit of a tool dive into some ways to being really informed about what's happening in Washington. Particularly what's happening in your members. I think there is a little or we think it's not as well-known as it should be

website. It's a government website that congress has called Congress.gov and any of cuss go to the website and put in an e-mail address and have an account and follow what our members are doing. They -- there is a way to look up who represents you based on your address and get a daily e-mail that lets you know when your senator and representative have sponsored a new bill or when there is a vote on a bill and you also can look at the bills you care about even if your member is not on it and get updates about what's happening with those bills. Or they are having a hearing. It's a nice way to get the information directly from the source because everything on Congress.gov comes from the official actions of Congress. You don't have to worry about a news reporter finding it for you. It can come to your own e-mail every day. We think about it as a fun thing to try out and a way to really know what's happening and use that knowledge to build relationships.

One of the things I often do is if I see my senator do something that I like, even if it's not something that I will be working on, I will send a quick thank you note and say I saw you co-sponsored a bill on school lunch funding even though that might not be my number one priority, it's a chance for me to reach out and say something positive. The same website lets you follow the budget process so you can track down what's happening in terms of the money that we are spending in the Federal Government and really move that forward. So we are excited about you all trying out Congress.gov and letting us know if it's helping you track information and get the information you need to learn more.

In support of that, with very a couple of suggestions of things that you could be tracking right now when you are following Congress.gov. We have two buckets of bills that we are watching closely and watching what's happening. One is in the higher education space and a little bit of crossing over to say there are bills because there is not a clear bill of what's going to happen with reauthorization of higher ed but there are bills that are starting to happen that senator Alexandra introduced pieces and we are getting ready to see a house bill so there are places that we can start tracking there. It's kind of exciting because there is a lot of input happening. They are asking constituents so it's the right time to check in with your members to say where are you on higher ed? Have you included things like inclusive post secondary education. Where that tips it or let me tell you what we are doing in our state and making sure it's in

there. One of the other things we have seen a lot of interest in this year is the transformation for competitive employment act. This is a fun one to watch because it has a bill that is on the house side and a bill on the senate side so you can put in both bill members and track it. This is a bill that will create an eight year plan to change the way our employment support works in America and transform them to a different infrastructure to support people at getting access to competitive and integrative employment. So it will be a big change actually also it matches the change that some states have made and moving away from 14C or shelter workshops and moving to competitive employment. If you are in a state that has done that it's a great bill to follow and get engaged and be a leader in the country and say we know what works here and these are some things that were great and doing differently going forward or for your state saying this is a new idea to see what members are talking about.

Also a really nice tie to our work in education. Most of the work we are about access to future work force and having those conversations together. Sometimes you meet with a member of Congress and they don't care that much about education, but most of the time they will care about the economy and jobs. So if you start the conversation about jobs and then put in the education you can get a lot of bang for your buck.

So we will pause there before we do some more details on what are some strategies to have those conversations. What are the ways to communicate. What are our tips. But just to see if you have questions about what's happening in Washington. What the topics are in the 116th congress. If there is anything you want to hear about before we go about -- 116th Congress. If there is anything you want to hear about before we go on.

>> If you have questions or comments you with vil to make them in the chat box because everyone is muted on the call. And if you don't see your chat box, just hover along the bottom or top of your zoom screen and see it in the options. I see Mark Turner has a question about ABLE accounts.

>> That's a great account. ABLE accounts, ABLE has been a law that's enacted and are an opportunity for individuals with disabilities and their families to save certain numbers of dollars. And in a way that does not affect the access to an eligibility for other systems that are critical for people with disabilities. There is a lot that sort of learning that's

happened between the time that those first bills were passed and now about how do we make ABLE accounts work in the long term. There are a couple of big problems that are not super big problems but the biggest issue is not as many people are using them as we hoped. And that makes it hard for states to continue to offer them. Originally when we started talking about ABLE accounts we wanted a broad group of people in accessing them. In passing bills there is compromise. It was to set a certain number age that you have to have acquired your disability by to be eligible or allowed to have able accounts. Now there are new efforts to extend that. And that would raise the age of eligibility and the idea is that we now know there are a lot of people who acquired disability as young adults. Some of those are requiring disabilities because they are serving the military. And they have been injured because of their military service. Some of those are requiring disability from medical issues or injuries that they acquired in life and the life of the young adult. So there is an active bill bipartisan house and senate to raise the age for the ABLE accounts. It feels like it's getting some interest. It hasn't gotten enough interest in the sort of -- when we talked about there is a lot of things happening in Washington that's taking up the -- and that's been a barrier but one thing that AUCD is following and partnering on. One thing that is helpful for members to know, you can look up your ABLE accounts. You can look up ABLE bills on-line and see if your members have signed. They want to hear from folks about why this matters p. And they want to hear from people who have ABLE accounts about how important it is to keep this system going. And they also want to hear from people who don't have ABLE accounts and might consider it but there are barriers and they want to hear about those things. It's a great opportunity for you to engage.

So the other question about the ABLE account, is there any changes about the amount and the max and the question really calls out that the max amount is not high enough to deal with college. I will say there is not current effort to increase the max, but there was a small effort to increase an option around that college piece. And actually happened under the last tax bill. You may remember that the President and the Republicans in Congress passed a new tax law and in that law they allowed people to start regular 529 college plan and then to be able to shift that to an ABLE account and move money over. So the idea was to give families of kids and who have disabilities and thinking I'm not sure. Although they will use a college account or whether

they will need to support for other pieces. Different ways to save so the idea was that might get more parents of students with disabilities to open and some cases a 529 account and an ABLE account so they have more resources to bring for college. That's been the compromise at the moment, but your point about the needing more a higher amount in order for ABLE accounts to be effective for higher ed is what your members should be hearing about from you.

So I'm not seeing any other questions yet, but please type them in and we will have additional time at the end to -- we will it take a deeper dive into the tips and suggestions we have for sharing information with your members.

>> There are five different ways to contact your member of Congress. And I will go over them. One is e-mail. It's great to e-mail your senators or your Congress people and especially after you visit and say, hello. Here is so and so. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Talk with me. I enjoyed blah, blah, blah. And you might want to follow up on your discussion that you had with them. Another --

>> May I ask a question about e-mail. One thing we hear about e-mail, how do you find out their e-mail address. That goes back to the Congress.gov site that will take you to every member's website. The e-mail addresses for the individual member are a little different. You will be asked to send an e-mail in a form but another trick to it and that's that you can ask to send the e-mail directly to the staffer. If you aren't a person that likes to send an e-mail in a form, you can call their office which is Liz's second thing and ask for their education staffer's e-mail address and that will give you the right person to send the e-mail directly to.

>> Thank you, Rylin. As Rylin said, calling is a really good way to communicate with your staff. Your members. One of my favorite ways is going and visit. Go and visit your -- your member of Congress. I know it's easier for me to say it than doing it -- I know the first time I went to visit my senator or Congress people I was very nervous, but as one of my friends said, they put on their pants just as well as we do. And visiting. And then follow up with an e-mail to say thank you for taking the time. This is what we talked about. Another way is tweeting. You might do a lot of tweets. As Rylin said earlier,

unconventional ways that the administration does things, tweeting is a wonderful way to communicate and people -- the members love to know you are tweeting people. And then e-mail is really hard to send things to the senate right now and --

>> You mean snail mail.

>> Yes, snail mail. I guess the mail is really hard so fax is somewhat hard but it can be doable. But the most important thing I think is communicating with your member. In whatever way makes sense for you.

>> Liz provided a lot of different options in terms of communication, and we were having a fun conversation earlier about what was each of our favorites and my guess about Liz was actually long. That was a fun conversation to have, but the reality is that there is no wrong way to do it. And any option is a good option so we really wanted to let you know it's about communication and thinking about it instead of a one-time thing as about building relationships. You want your member to know that you are an expert and that you have experience around disability systems. So when they are looking at a bill or facing a budget they need to make decisions about, that they can reach out to you and you can let them know what's happening in your state. And how you get to that place for members of Congress are calling to ask you for advice is just by communicating.

So one thing that people get a little bit nervous about or aren't really sure about is they are I keep getting asked to talk to a staffer and I wanted to talk directly to a member and does it matter?

>> Can I answer that?

>> Sure.

>> Because I mentioned and then I forgot. Rylin is right, and you might think that it's more important to contact your member and it's fun to see -- to see your senator Bloomenthal or senator van Han but it's more important to meet with a staffer. Because when you meet with a senator they are very busy and sometimes the schedule or their staff will pull them into meetings. And they have to go because Congress is a very busy place. So the staffer will give you time.

I was -- I had the good fortune to be -- in one of the senator's office and I followed along the staffer and I went and they scheduled the meeting a half an hour and really they scheduled it so I have now -- not 35 minutes, not 45 minutes. And say, oh, yeah, if you are talking to -- never mind about the other person. They will cut you off and will say, I'm sorry, I have to go to another meeting.

>> So Liz has a great point and that's true in Washington. That meetings are happening really fast. So when we think about our meeting with staffers it's great to know that each member will have a staffer who is responsibility is to know about education and to know about employment. So learning who that staffer is and making sure that you're sharing information with them. They can be your go-to if you have a question about a bill. They can also start to use you as a resource when they need information about what's happening. The one thing -- the other thing to know about staffers is they are young. This is a job that's really tough. It takes a lot of hours and a lot of energy. But they don't generally have a really wide variety of experience so they really need to hear from us to get the experience and the knowledge. Knowing that. It's also important to know that they change jobs a lot. It may than you have a great staffer in an office and you feel like, not the person that you can get all great answers to and then it may happen that they move on in their career. So it's something to always be thinking about. Have I checked in? Do I know who is handling this for my member. Do I know who the right person is because another chance to build that relationship. Sometimes we only call our members of Congress or we only ask for appointments when we are in Washington or when we have a really important vote that we care about. But really having a relationship is about much longer gain.

The other thing that's so important to know is that every member has offices right back in your district. And sometimes those are the right places to have meetings. So if you are not a person that's coming to Washington regularly or ever coming to Washington, know that you can meet with members and their staffer right in your home community and that's a great way to build relationships. Every single meeting that's happening in your state is shared back with a member so it's not that it stays in the state. The other thing to know is that it doesn't have to be around a meeting. You can update them around what's happening in your program. It's always a great idea to give a member a call

every couple of months to talk about what's important to you and what changes you are seeing and what needs you are seeing. If you are involved in a project that has new data or maybe new student as part of a school year. Sending the information. If something is great has happened like a grant or a great outcome, sharing the news release, sharing the celebration, using all of the pieces of information as a way to build relationships. And then the other great thing to do is invite members to you. Invite them to come. People think they need to have a really fancy day for inviting a member of Congress to come. Actually you can invite them to come to anything. You can invite them to come and see how your program works. You can invite them to come into your home and shadow your experience as a person with a disability. They might not always say yes to every invitation, but it's another chance to share information and build relationships.

Then we said at the beginning it's always smart to be thinking about what can I -- somebody about. Sometimes it's hard with a political environment where we may not always agree with everyone, have found if you keep looking there is something you can thank them for. Thank you for coming to this parade in my community. Thank you for showing up and meeting with people. Thank you for listening. Those are great ways to build relationships.

We think about the good and the bad and the winning of losing of politics. It's a hard job and there is a lot going on. So you can really make a lot of progress by building relationships and thinking and thanking and thinking about this individual.

>> The next thing is -- does info who the man is on the screen?

>> The man in the cowboy hat. And watch the chat box to see if somebody types in the answer. Somebody did. The answer is.

>> Who -- they got it right. Justin Dart. You are right. You are absolutely right. Very good. Justin Dart was the grandfather of the ADA, what we call the grandfather of the ADA. And he would always say -- depends on this because it does and that's what we are going to be talking about. Voting. It's real important to vote in every election but next year's really important as I said before. The presidential election and you have voiced in the White House and it's important. Right now we

are just at the beginning stages of in -- and it might feel like talking about this for months and months but we are just beginning on who the candidates are and informed, as I said before, and you also need to register. If you haven't registered, you need to register. And 35.2 million people with disabilities are eligible to vote. That's a lot. And if we all vote, can you imagine how much voices, what kind of voice we will all be sharing, talking about.

>> So we spent a lot of time of what's happening in Washington and what are ways you can share information and we know that one of the key things is to have a lot of information to continue the conversation, to be staying in touch. So we wanted to talk about some of our favorite ways to do that and favorite resources. We will start with shameless plugs. We are pretty fond of AUCD's policy resources. We have two things that we really like to tell people about. One is a web series that happens every Tuesday. It's called Tuesdays with Liz, which you have met. And it's a series that tries to make policy accessible for everyone so they are short YouTube videos. One comes out every Tuesday and it's a great opportunity to sort of take a minute and get a little bit of an update. Often there are interviews with super cool people. Sometimes famous people. And sometimes people with great lived experiences to help us learn more about p.

>> Do you want me to share? This -- today's episode is I interviewed senator from Illinois. And she has done an amazing job. She -- you should tune in to that episode because -- to find out there is a lot of that just came out that it's really important to people. It's just --

>> Excellent plug. The other thing that we like here at AUCD, every Monday we send out disability policy news in brief -- sometimes it's not super brief. We try to talk about what's happening here in Washington and give you action steps. So we hope that you can subscribe to in brief. It's free. Everybody can subscribe and read it and then have something to share back with your members. Have an issue that you care about and have words to use. We hope that will work.

Our final favorite resource from inside AUCD. It's not really a resource but an interesting resource because it matches some of our interests in having things be as clear as possible and as simple as possible. There is a teenager, his name is Gabe Fleischer who was in Minnesota -- I'm blanking on the state and

somebody can question me if they know. He wakes up every morning before he goes off to high school and writes a wake up a blog and sends it out via e-mail. The thing about Gabe that's different from the work that we do at AUCD is that he is looking at everything. Not just disability but he is one of our favorite things to read if you just want to read a one source that tells you the big picture of what's happening in Washington and you want it to be clear so we think Gabe is leading the way. You might be -- at least for me, he is my favorite above CNN and the "Washington Post" because he is clear and easy to follow. And now Liz will talk about our other two resources

>> And all related -- one is I host a Think College a group that has a lot to say. It's called emerging Advo -- it's called emerging advocated, hosted by me. It's about people who talk about how to advocate for themselves. And someone on the last call and someone brought up to talk about transportation. She was really interested in transportation. So in a future show we will be sharing about that and maybe having herb the co-host. So we are very excited about that. Just teaching people how to -- that we are teaching each other on how to speak up for ourselves.

And then the next group is also hosted by one of our colleagues, Denise Rozell, who might also be on this call. It's around public policy for people with disabilities and we use everyone about education and employment. Basically what we are talking about today. So please see one or both of them. We would love to have you.

>> We are at the place to ask questions but we wanted to share that even if you don't have questions for the chat box now, Liz and I are happy to continue the conversation and be a resource so on this frame you will see both of our e-mail addresses, our phone numbers and our Twitter handles so you can reach out and stay connected. We are happy to hear from you about what matters so we can help use that work here that we are doing in Washington. If you are running in road blocks or you are having trouble finding the right staffer, we are happy to help work those through and get you connected as you build those relationships. Love to hear what other questions we have and I will look in the chat box. Great things are in the chat box. In addition to Liz's great ad for today's Tuesdays with Liz, there is a link to the episodes. Nice and easy to check. And great conversation about Justin Dart and also the legacy and that his mission continued and his family including his widow conditions

his work. I think that I love that call out. Mary talked about that his mission continues. And think that his mission and continuing it is all of our responsibility and some of the work we get to do together. So that's a wonderful thing to think of.

>> Can I also add, about Tuesday with Liz, if there is a topic that you are really interested in, how to explain something about OR or whatever you are interested in, that we have -- just drop me a line or Rylin and we will look into that. I can't promise that we will do every suggestion just because there are only 52 weeks of the year and we are quite busy with a lot of things. We will do our best.

>> So it looks like -- I see a comment from Mark. It says state DDA, self-directed services funding usage toward college? Maryland versus Virginia. So I think Mark's question around what's happening at the state level in some of the decisions are being made around service funding to support college. That's a great question and a complicated question. There is a couple of things we would love to share. I wished I had it in front of me. I hope my -- on the website, the with ender in, maybe she can push in the link. There was recently a new guidance that came out in the form of some questions and answers from the Department of Education that we are hopeful will help different states make more informed decisions about what the options are and can be part of each conversation for funding. Students in post secondary settings, but there is a significant amount of difference about what's happening in the states. Some of that advocacy to move things forward in your state is appropriate to do at the state level so when Liz was talking about who to know. You can be sharing what you are seeing in other states that you would love to see in your state with your governor and your state representative. Denise did have that link for us which is great. We are great to have a team so the other question that's coming up also you should refer to the link that Denise shared is there funding from Voc. rehab and these are all questions that we tried to -- Denise famously tried to untangle in the policy tangle that led to some of those questions and answers. We are seeing differences in states. Some of it are questions around Voc. rehab or Medicaid funding or what's happening with Department of Education funding from the K12 space that can be used in some settings but there is also conversations that are happening in states about state scholarships or state supported general funds to allow for options. So thinking about this is a great topic and this issue about how we get access to how we get it paid for

is a place where we need to be speaking both to our senators and representatives at the federal level, to call out the differences and need for funding and access and then to share that same message right, we are governor and what is happening at the state level. The great thing about Think College is that it's a resource to let you know what's happening as the affinity group in different states and take examples from what California is looking at to move it. Mark was starting the conversation about what is happening in Maryland versus Virginia. So those details are part of the resources that Think College can help you connect with and part of the story you can share with both your federal delegation and the states.

And great sharing that's happening in that chat box. We are seeing there is more information about VR and their resource library. And the innovation exchange page. So a lot of those questions about what's happening with VR. What's happening with other funding to use. How do we not risk Social Security disability access if we have received other funding. Looking at what's happening, how people have dealt with in other states using those models to raise the conversation in your state and then really take a look at that new question and answer from the Department of Education because it's a chance to go back to your state folks where you might have heard the answer no before and say there is new information here we need to have this conversation again.

I know we have two or three more minutes.

>> On the any other plug about Tuesday and reminded us all in the interview that hopefully you -- hopefully you watch on today or sometime this week, never take no for an answer. If you want to be an advocate, never, never take no for an answer.

>> That really speaks to these questions about how do we solve the funding problem? Money of us have run into a nowhere we can't do that or we can't use this particular type of funding and Liz is right and senator Duckworth is right. It's time to keep having that conversation and that's what we can do through relationship and group policy change over time.

>> That was a good addition, Liz. It's good advice. While we are wrapping up questions and pointing you to the right resources and things, I will put up a poll with a webinar evaluation and this helps the staff at Think College plan for future webinars

and give feedback to presenters about their materials. I will just echo as a person who uses the AUCD website a lot that there is a ton of really helpful information there on the archives of Tuesday with Liz and the policy update that Rylin sends out and just a ton of stuff and hopefully if you can't find it there, you can look at the Think College website. We have technical assistance providers -- our Voc. rehab provider and is the wealth of knowledge. So if you can't get what you need from Rylin or Denise or Liz or someone else from Think College, then I don't know. I'm really grateful to Rylin and Liz for being here today and for all of you who attended -- does anyone else have any final comes or questions they would like to share?

>> We are grateful for the conversation and we are also really excited to continue to hear from you. I love the point about if we can't find it at Think College or AUCD we are in trouble. Actually, it's an opportunity for all of you to help us find it. Find out what's missing.

>> And if senator Duckworth reminded us, never take no for an answer.

>> That's right.

>> And we won't say no to you. We will help you find whatever you are looking for.

>> Thank you.

>> Have a nice day, everyone.

>> Bye.

>> If you have any questions you can contact Liz or Rylin and this recording and the materials from the webinar will be available on the Think College website. So thank you very much.