

Leadership That Works: Enhancing the Independence of All Marylanders

Goals and Values for an Accessible Maryland

In a state as strong as Maryland, there is no reason why a disability should be a barrier to independence. Martin O'Malley and Anthony Brown firmly believe that we are all in this together, and if we are to live up to Maryland's potential we must ensure that all Marylanders have the opportunity to participate in leading our state forward. Six years after the *Olmstead* decision, we need to do more to provide Maryland families with community and home-based care options that can also save resources for the state. We must also enhance housing options, allow Marylanders with disabilities the freedom to travel across the state, better assure services through fair reimbursements, and enhance educational and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Paths to Progress

As Maryland's next Governor, Martin O'Malley will:

- **Be a Strong Advocate for the Disability Community**
Martin O'Malley believes Maryland's disability community and the entire state would benefit from a strong voice at the top of government who will provide the necessary leadership to bring people together, find solutions, forge compromises when necessary and tackle head-on the difficult challenges facing our state in the delivery and capacity of services for people with special needs. As Governor, Martin O'Malley will work closely with leaders and members of the disability community to ensure they have a voice in the decisions and policies which closely affect their lives. Martin O'Malley knows that we can promote greater employment, make health care more affordable, use our state resources in a smarter manner and improve accessible transportation if we are not afraid to take on the difficult problems and work together to find solutions. If we do that, Maryland will become a better, stronger state for all its citizens.
- **Empower the Department of Disabilities to Make Reform and Improvements Easier**
With the creation of the Maryland Department of Disabilities in 2004, our state passed a major milestone in assisting the disability community. However, while the creation was a significant goal, much more needs to be done to ensure the Department has the tools and resources to influence the decisions and regulations of other state government agencies. As Governor, Martin O'Malley will work not only to secure adequate funding for the Department of Disabilities so that it can fully accomplish its current mission, but he will also seek to strengthen and expand its authority.
- **Support the *Olmstead* Decision and Promote Community-Based Services and Care**
The historic Supreme Court decision in 1999, known as the *Olmstead* case, laid the groundwork for a more community-oriented approach to services and care. We need to do more to provide Maryland families with community and home-based care options that can also save the state resources. As governor, Martin O'Malley will support the *Olmstead* decision and use state resources to better promote community oriented support and services. Studies show that the benefits of community based services include greater

employment, a more active social life, increased attendance in school and the freedom to worship—important goals that the State of Maryland must support. By better managing the state’s already limited funding and resources, we can improve the quality of life for many people and better serve many more.

- **Create More Affordable Housing Across Maryland and Publicize Available and Accessible Housing**
Martin O’Malley knows that affordable housing is a critical issue to more and more Marylanders each year. The recent rises in the price of housing have had an even greater impact on people with disabilities, many of whom live on fixed incomes and already find affordable and accessible housing difficult to obtain. As Governor, Martin O’Malley will create a statewide affordable housing fund to support development projects that ensure affordable housing for people of low and moderate-income families including persons with disabilities. O’Malley will uphold the Fair Housing Act to ensure people with disabilities are afforded the rights they deserve. Additionally, Martin O’Malley will work with appropriate state agencies, the private housing sector and advocates of the disability community to ensure there is more and better information provided on available, accessible housing. With the goals of universal design and increased “visitability,” O’Malley believes we can significantly improve Maryland’s housing crisis.
- **Encourage Greater Private and Public Sector Employment**
As Governor, Martin O’Malley will aggressively inform the private sector of the importance and the benefits of job creation for people with disabilities. The State of Maryland offers numerous incentives for private employers to make their workplaces accessible and functional for people with disabilities. As Governor, Martin O’Malley will work to ensure more companies are aware of these benefits. Additionally, the State of Maryland should make it a priority to enforce our non-discrimination laws, encourage more people with disabilities to apply for open positions in government and ensure that more workplaces have the resources and technology to assist in the employment of people with disabilities.
- **Make Quality Health Care and Services More Affordable and Accessible**
Martin O’Malley believes access to health care should be a right – not a privilege. O’Malley shares the goal of affordable health care for all Maryland residents and understands that, without federal leadership, we cannot fully achieve these goals. However, as Governor, Martin O’Malley will make significant strides to provide quality and affordable health care to all people at the state level. O’Malley will address Maryland’s nursing and assisted care shortage and work to make sure the state’s wages for health care and social service workers are not hampering the quality and delivery of services to people with disabilities.
- **Improve Transportation Options for People with Disabilities**
Martin O’Malley believes that we need a seamless public transportation system that allows Marylanders to cross the entire state. As Governor, Martin O’Malley will convene a statewide summit to create a realistic, coordinated statewide transportation plan for people with disabilities. O’Malley will improve the Paratransit system and ensure it is fully funded to meet the needs of Marylanders. Furthermore, O’Malley will end the raiding of Maryland’s Transportation Trust Fund, and ensure that money meant for improvements and maintenance of sidewalks, curb-cuts, bus stops and crosswalks will be available.
- **Fully Fund and Support Education for Children with Disabilities**
Martin O’Malley will fully fund the entire Thornton Commission plan to improve K-12 education across Maryland, reduce the achievement gap, reduce class sizes and recruit and retain the quality teachers our children with special needs deserve. As Governor, Martin O’Malley will improve the funding and delivery of special education services to children and work to ensure children with disabilities have access to academic and extracurricular activities. He will also promote more parental involvement in the design and implementation of Individualized Education Programs.

A Record of Progress

- Martin O'Malley is working with Baltimore's neighbors to develop a geographic information system (GIS) that can be used to create a coordinated transportation service that will reduce travel time and costs for people with disabilities in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area.
- Martin O'Malley sponsored a public forum on Paratransit Services jointly with the Maryland Department of Transportation, Maryland Transit Administration and Mobility Services to discuss citizens' rights to compatible transportation and to educate the public about new Paratransit services.
- Martin O'Malley implemented the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) position in the City Government to help educate and provide technical assistance to local employers so that they may hire persons with disabilities.
- Martin O'Malley developed new partnerships with key community-based disability service providers through the Mayor's Office of Employment Development (MOED). A cross-referral system allows MOED to refer persons with disabilities to providers that will collaborate with MOED to develop support, training, and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Martin O'Malley, through the DPN and MOED, developed and implemented a comprehensive training curriculum that provides ongoing technical assistance and training to One-Stop Career Center staff and partners on current best practices in employment services for individuals with disabilities.
- Martin O'Malley increased access to polling places for people with disabilities by bringing experts in the community together to identify problems and make recommendations. Based on these recommendations, Baltimore enhanced training for election judges and increased accessibility to polling places across the City.
- Under Martin O'Malley, 91 Baltimore playgrounds have been built or renovated to comply with the ADA.
- Martin O'Malley initiated a disability hangtag revision, education, monitoring, and enforcement project, in response to the increased illegal use of disability parking hangtags. A city taskforce identified the 20 highest areas of handicapped parking violations and targeted public education and enforcement programs that resulted in citations and confiscation of placards and license plates.
- Baltimore has installed several audible pedestrian traffic signals to help individuals with visual impairments and installed flashing smoke detectors for persons with hearing impairments.
- Recognizing his innovative and bold leadership to address some of Baltimore's toughest problems, and the progress he had made to make health care more accessible, Time Magazine recently named Martin O'Malley one of the top five big city mayors in America.

A Stronger Maryland Can Do Better.

Martin O'Malley and Anthony Brown – Leadership That Works

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