



JOHN R. KASICH  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF OHIO

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Office of the Governor gives notice that there will be a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed redesignation of the Ohio system to protect and advocate the rights of people with disabilities (P&A) and Client Assistance Program (CAP) for people with disabilities. The hearing will be held on September 5, 2012, at the first floor hearing room in the Rhodes State Office Tower, 30 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio, at 10:00 a.m.

Federal law requires every state and territory to designate an agency to protect and advocate for the legal, human, and civil rights of people with disabilities. Federal law also requires a client assistance program to advocate for applicants for and recipients of services of the state's vocational rehabilitation agency and centers for independent living.

In Ohio the current agency performing these services is the Ohio Legal Rights Service (LRS), an independent state agency. As required by the current Ohio budget bill, HB 153, these functions will transfer from the Legal Rights Service to a not-for-profit corporation, the Ohio Disability Rights Law and Policy Center, Inc. (Disability Rights Ohio). Disability Rights Ohio is an independent § 501(c)(3) organization that has been established by the administrator of the LRS to receive the P&A and CAP designation by the Governor, and is qualified under federal law to receive the designation.

Federal law requires that there must be good cause to support a redesignation of the P&A and CAP. The Governor has determined that good cause exists to support this redesignation as it:

- recognizes the action of the General Assembly requiring that the P&A and CAP be designated to a private entity, and abolishing the Ohio Legal Rights Service, its Ombudsman Section, and the Ohio Legal Rights Service Commission on October 1, 2012;
- is consistent with the plan set out by the General Assembly that requires retention of program personnel and capacity and provides that advocacy services to Ohioans with disabilities will not be disrupted by the transition;
- promotes fiscal responsibility and, consistent with state policy, allows for further streamlining of state government;
- eliminates any perceived conflict of interest associated with the current placement of the P&A and CAP in state government;
- allows the P&A and CAP greater independence in personnel and other administrative matters, and facilitates compliance with federal requirements in these areas;
- promotes compliance with federal law related to governing authority composition; and
- allows the P&A and CAP to be more flexible with current resources and to explore financial resources for which those programs currently do not qualify.

Further information, including the full public notice of intent to redesignate, is available at the LRS website, [www.olrs.ohio.gov/publicnotice](http://www.olrs.ohio.gov/publicnotice). Additional information on Disability Rights Ohio is available at [www.disabilityrightsohio.org](http://www.disabilityrightsohio.org). For additional information on the public hearing, please call Art Wills at LRS, 614-466-7264 ext. 154, or Sandra Callas, executive assistant at the Governor's office, at 614-644-0872.