



# CommunicAbility

A Quarterly Newsletter For Our Community Members with Disabilities

## Winter/Spring 2020 Vol. 20, Ed. 1

### Articles

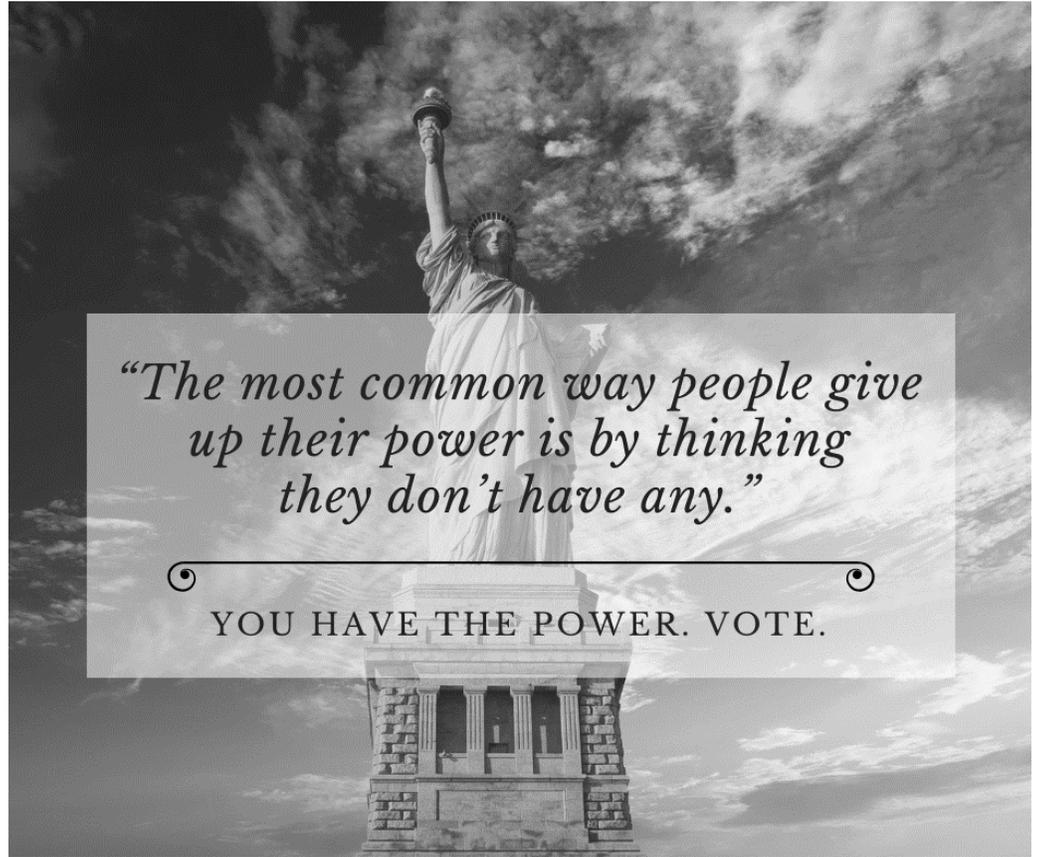
- 2020: A Future with Us?
- Prepare to Vote
- Voter Checklist

### NHU Features

- Voting Word Search

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”*

*-Margaret Mead*



## 2020: A Future with Us?

The 2015 version of this article started with despair. A lament that our elected officials didn't hear us, or worse, they didn't care to hear us. The needs of Americans with disabilities, their families and allies were at the bottom of the proverbial pile. We didn't matter. We were not a big enough threat to their political aspirations.

This feeling was reinforced over the last several years with one-sided policy proposals and decisions that adversely and disproportionately affected Americans with complex health and long-term care needs. (Specifically in the last few months with impactful proposed changes to the SSI/SSDI and Medicaid programs.)

In 2015, we despaired that “we the people” had become a silent many, watching democracy slowly die...our freedom and power eroding as our apathy swelled. We called for action. A movement. An uprising. We were pessimistic, yet hopeful, if that's even possible.

## No Internet?

If you do not have access to the Internet at home, and are unable to access the websites listed in this newsletter, we would be happy to mail you a printed copy of the information that is available online.

To request a printed copy, please contact us via phone 414-299-0124.

Thank you!

New Horizons Un-Limited is a Milwaukee-based, non-profit organization that provides individuals with lifelong disabilities increased access to the information, tools and life experiences that will enable them to improve their lives.



[new-horizons.org](http://new-horizons.org)



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## 2020: A Future With Us? *(continued from page 1)*

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Then, in 2016 and the years to follow, there was a shift. There was a swell of advocates from all walks of life, all manner of disability, demanding to be heard. Much like the early days of the pre-ADA disability rights movement, there was a momentum, a force that could no longer be disregarded.

The candidates slowly started noticing. They talked about disability policy. They consulted with disabled advocates. Many of their campaigns thoughtfully created comprehensive disability policy plans ahead of the primary season. A first in any major election.

It's a shift years in the making, but one that has barely progressed past a nudge. The truth is, the majority of polling places remain inaccessible to voters with disabilities. A wave of restrictive voter ID laws and a recent court ruling removing unsuspecting voters from voter rolls make voting even more difficult. Add in a lack of transportation to the polls, and we're left with a whole lot of momentum with nowhere to go.

### **So, what is a hopeful voter to do?**

You need to prepare for the fact that voting while disabled is not as easy as it should be.

There is work involved (far too much work, if we're being completely honest). It's not fair, but the work is necessary until we get to the place where these barriers no longer exist. We can only get there if we elect people who respect and listen to us.

We MUST do what needs to be done to ensure our vote counts, all while advocating loudly for change. You will be tempted by apathy – that nagging, deceptive voice that tries to convince you that your work will not matter. Do it anyway. Once apathy takes hold, it is a most formidable, destructive beast. Fight it. Fight it hard!

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## Prepare to Vote: Take it One Step at a Time

**First, are you a registered voter?** Double check your state's voter registration process and verify your status as a registered voter. Have you moved recently? You may have to re-register. If you're not registered, take care of that as soon as you can. Visit Vote Smart: Voter Registration - [votesmart.org/elections/voter-registration](https://votesmart.org/elections/voter-registration)

**Second, do you have a valid form of ID to vote in your state?** Double-check your state's voter ID policy. Some states are more restrictive than others are. Visit Voter Identification Requirements: Voter ID Laws - [www.usa.gov/voter-id](https://www.usa.gov/voter-id)

**Third, do you know your state's early voting/absentee voting policy?** If you don't have transportation to the polls or suspect you may have difficulty accessing the notoriously inaccessible polling place, many states allow voters to vote via an absentee ballot via mail.

Each state has their own early voting/absentee policy. Learn what is required in your state by visiting [ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx](https://ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/absentee-and-early-voting.aspx)

**Fourth, do you know your rights as a voter?** Learn which laws protect the rights of voters with disabilities and come armed with this knowledge when you vote. Visit [ada.gov/ada\\_voting/ada\\_voting\\_ta.htm](https://ada.gov/ada_voting/ada_voting_ta.htm)

**Fifth, proactively contact your Election officials** to ensure improved accessibility at the polls on Election Day. Visit [www.usa.gov/election-office](https://www.usa.gov/election-office) to find your local Election Office. Be sure they are armed with the most recent ADA Checklist for Polling Places. Find the checklist here: [ada.gov/votingchecklist.htm](https://ada.gov/votingchecklist.htm)

It is a lot. We know. If you're feeling overwhelmed do not hesitate to reach out. Power and motivation is often found among friends. Consider connecting with other advocates via Crip The Vote - [cripthevote.blogspot.com](https://cripthevote.blogspot.com)

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## Voter Checklist

We have created a Voter Checklist to help you prepare for the 2020 Presidential Election. Please share with your family, friends, and colleagues, and encourage them to vote. Let this be the year where our vote makes the difference. Our checklist is available online: [new-horizons.org/pdf/voteck.pdf](https://new-horizons.org/pdf/voteck.pdf)

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*New Horizons Un-Limited*  
*A Grassroots NPO for People with Disabilities*

*Vote as if your life depends on it.*  
*Because it does.*  
- Justin Dart

# VOTER CHECKLIST

## ARE YOU READY TO VOTE?

### EIGHT THINGS YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE THE ELECTION

**Review Your I.D.**

Many states require a valid state-issued photo I.D. Check your state's requirements here: [usa.gov/voter-id](https://www.usa.gov/voter-id)

**REGISTER to VOTE**

Is this your first time voting? Have you moved or changed your name recently? Check your registration status here: [vote.gov](https://www.vote.gov)

**REQUEST an ABSENTEE BALLOT**

If you have a disability or other reason that prevents you from going to the polls on Election Day, be sure to request an absentee ballot by your state's deadline. Find your local election office here: [usa.gov/election-office](https://www.usa.gov/election-office)

**VERIFY Polling Place ACCESS**

If you choose (or are required) to vote in person and need assistance, be sure to verify the process to request it ahead of time via your County Clerk's Office.

**REVIEW Your SAMPLE BALLOT**

Check out who exactly is on your ballot ahead of time. Request a sample ballot via your local Election Office. Find your office here: [usa.gov/election-office](https://www.usa.gov/election-office)

**KNOW Your CANDIDATES**

Which candidates best represent the needs of our country and its citizens? Find out here: [justfacts.votesmart.org](https://www.justfacts.votesmart.org)

**CHECK Your FACTS & BIASES**

You cannot believe everything you read or hear. Always validate claims and accusations before jumping to conclusions. Always check multiple, non-biased sources. Be sure your bias is not guiding your decisions.

**ENCOURAGE OTHERS to VOTE**

There is strength in numbers. Talk to everyone you know about the importance of voting. Share this checklist. Help others prepare for Election Day 2020.

**Return Service Requested**

## YOU Have the Power! Vote!

Will you ensure your vote counts? Contemplate each of these words as you consider your and your country's future.

***“Vote as if your life depends on it... because it does!”***

BALLOT	PEOPLE POWERED
BE INFORMED	RESEARCH
CANDIDATES	SILENCE IS CONSENT
CHANGE	SPEAK UP
CHOOSE	UNITE
DEMOCRACY	VOTE
ELECTION	YOUR FUTURE
IDEAS	YOUR RIGHTS
MOVE FORWARD	YOUR VOICE

W Y K O T G O I A L L M O O Z O T E  
M U N I T E D E M O C R A C Y I N A  
O E U O E X U E S O O H C F K Z E K  
V D O Q B O Z J P S J N X N O N S M  
E I L A Y Q D M F D O B X G P R N V  
F P E O P L E P O W E R E D M P O I  
O M R C A N D I D A T E S X R T C D  
R A Y B C U D E M R O F N I E B S E  
W E R U T U F R U O Y B N B S W I A  
A U U U O S I O M T P P T A E T E S  
R E S P E A K U P V A D O L A P C G  
D E D K Y E L E C T I O N L R U N A  
F G Y O U R V O I C E Z V O C N E A  
A N I J S Y V S E C D R P T H K L Y  
A A O S T H G I R R U O Y T F T I K  
F H N R L J U I O A T I R Y A P S L  
R C E W E A O D M X H S J C L U P K



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