

Center for Disability Rights
Regional Center for Independent Living
497 State Street
Rochester, NY 14608

September 17, 2021

Council Members
New York State Independent Living Council
111 Washington Avenue, Suite 101
Albany, NY 12210

Dear NYSILC Council Members:

A year ago, an Open Letter to CDR and RCIL was published online, and recently we learned that this letter had been sent to members of the Council. We understand that the Council is responsible for jointly developing, monitoring, and evaluating the three-year Statewide Plan for Independent Living and does not play a role in the oversight of individual Centers. However, the Open Letter and related documents made defamatory statements about our organizations – including false statements charging our organization with serious crimes and statements intended to injure our organization's business. Without any knowledge of the work we do to govern the organization, the Open Letter falsely claimed that our board is absent and failing to carry out our responsibilities. Our Governance Committee discussed this matter and we feel that it is important for you – in your role as Council Members – to know that our Board of Directors takes its responsibilities seriously and fully investigated these allegations.

To understand our Board's role in governing the organization you need to first understand that both the Regional Center for Independent Living and the Center for Disability Rights are membership organizations. Both centers evolved from disability-led grassroots advocacy organizations run by their members, and our governance structure is designed to be responsive to our membership. When our organizations affiliated, the boards established a reciprocity agreement so that any individual who became a member of one organization was automatically a member of the other. Membership dues were established at a nominal cost so that membership is affordable for people with disabilities who have limited financial resources. Today, we have over 7,000 dues-paying members.

Although the defamatory Open Letter complained about the governance of the organization, of the 28 original signatories on the Open Letter, only one was in fact a member. That means over 96% of the original signatories were not members of the organizations, and only that single individual would have voted in the Board elections that had occurred – just weeks before the Open Letter calling for the resignation of nearly our entire Board was published.

In looking at the 23 former staff who were original signatories on the Open Letter, we identified that:

- Three (3) of these staff left due to serious employment issues. One was terminated for serious misconduct. A second resigned after changes in working conditions because CDR determined that the staff person had not been accurately reporting work hours on their timesheet, and a third quit without notice after being assigned to a new worksite in response to a complaint of harassment by his female coworkers.

- Four (4) were addressing performance issues through a formal performance improvement process, as part of disciplinary action or managerial review.
- Two (2) original signatories are ineligible for rehire because they failed to give adequate notice when they resigned.
- One (1) resigned while the organization was determining how to address multiple formal complaints filed with HR about behavior that was considered discriminatory or bullying by their subordinates.

None of the 23 original staff signatories who resigned identified Mr. Darling's management as the reason they left their position – even the two who reported directly to Mr. Darling. In fact, two staff specifically wrote personal emails to Mr. Darling citing other reasons for leaving CDR. It is also notable that the writers of the Open Letter never engaged the CDR Board in any way prior to publishing the document online.

Although these facts undercut the credibility of the issues that were raised in the Open Letter, our Board of Directors took its oversight responsibilities seriously. The Board identified 39 specific allegations in the Open Letter and related documents, and then reviewed over 1,000 pages of materials. The bulk of this material was original source documents – emails, personnel documents, and such – that provided direct evidence to the false nature of the published statements. These documents also illustrated that, in certain circumstances, individuals not only misrepresented the facts in the online document, but had taken actions that actually set up the allegations. This included the submission of false business instruments or the failure to provide critically important information to management that was subsequently reported in the Open Letter as a failure of management to act.

Most of the specific issues raised in the Open Letter were personnel-related matters, and such matters are treated confidentially by CDR and RCIL. We feel, however, that there are circumstances in this situation that warrant disclosure to the Council.

- In your role as Council Members, you develop and oversee the State Plan for Independent Living which allocates funding for our Centers, and we want to ensure that these false claims do not impact future decisions of the Council as they relate to our organizations and our funding.
- Because the Open Letter alleged that our Board is absent or complacent, a failure to provide you with a thorough and thoughtful response could be perceived – or portrayed – as evidence that the allegation of inadequate governance was accurate.
- Any issues we would be addressing, including information that our CEO was addressing performance or disciplinary matters with specific individuals, were already published in a public document prepared by the individuals themselves.
- The false allegations that were made against our organization – including false statements charging our organization with serious crimes and statements intended to injure our organization's business – were in fact defamatory statements.
- Given that two members of the Council signed the Open Letter, the allegations that we misused our federal funds, could not remain unaddressed.
- Finally, the two Council Members signed the Open Letter as "Esq." which appears to have been intended to add a level of credibility to the allegations of serious criminal activity.

Consequently, we are providing the following summary with the understanding that it is a private and confidential communication between our organizations and NYSILC Council Members.

The following sections provide a brief synopsis of each allegation followed by the findings of our Board review.

- 1. In July 2019, the Disability Community nationwide called upon you to hold Mr. Darling accountable for the xenophobic comments that he made in a U.S. Congressional office and... you have done nothing to hold Mr. Darling accountable or make amends with the Disability Community on behalf of CDR and RCIL.**

Mr. Darling publicly acknowledged that he used inappropriate language when he was comparing the House Democratic Leadership's different levels of support for two pieces of federal legislation: the Disability Integration Act and The American Dream and Promise Act – which had the same number of cosponsors in the House and very different outcomes. He publicly apologized multiple times which included issuing a list of amends. These amends were discussed in establishing his 2020 goals with Board officers who added a goal to specifically address one of the amends. The claim that the board did “nothing to hold Mr. Darling accountable or make amends” was entirely untrue, and the writers/original signatories on the Open Letter published this false allegation without any knowledge of these matters or exercising any apparent due diligence regarding the truthfulness of the claim.

Finally, in reviewing the content online we identified social media posted by Ms. Woodward which deliberately misrepresented Mr. Darling's personal social media commentary as xenophobic, posting a screenshot of a single tweet from a multi-tweet thread. She falsely stated that the original content had been deleted by Mr. Darling even though the tweet and original thread are still available online. This would prevent others from reading the entire thread and understanding the context and meaning of the original post. <https://cdrnys.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/False-and-misleading-tweet.pdf>

This allegation was unsubstantiated.

- 2. In December 2019, the Board received a request for information from ADAPT... about missing grant money in the amount of approximately \$65,000 to which this Board never substantively responded. The funds in question were from the Ford Foundation, awarded to NCIL and ADAPT, but were disbursed to CDR at Mr. Darling's directive. The grant funds were intended to fund grassroots advocacy efforts by supporting emerging ADAPT chapters across the nation. However, no emerging group ever received funding.**

The CDR Board had been fully informed of the issues with the Ford Foundation funds as the situation evolved, and in addressing this allegation, the board reviewed 175 pages of documentation. Documentation clearly demonstrated that ADAPT leadership was fully aware of the application for the Ford Foundation grant and was engaged in the application process.

Documentation further demonstrated that NCIL managed the grant and dictated the terms. The amounts to be invoiced were specified by NCIL, and NCIL staff sent several emails to CDR indicating how they wanted the invoices written and for what specific amounts. Although CDR was instructed to invoice NCIL as of March 2019, and although it has been presented that CDR held those funds for the entire time, NCIL did not fully pay the invoices until six months later at the end of September 2019.

Neither CDR nor Mr. Darling benefited from the grant funds as all of the work he did on the Ford Foundation grant was done entirely as a volunteer; neither he nor CDR ever invoiced or received any payment for any work. Original source documentation demonstrated that the activities funded by the project – supporting the right of Disabled people to live in freedom through educating legislators and constituents about the Disability Integration Act – was allowable under the grant. In fact, in an email exchange Kelly Buckland, NCIL Executive Director, specifically agreed that grassroots education could be funded under the grant and that should be included in the final Ford Foundation report.

Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that it was common practice within ADAPT to handle funds in a decentralized manner with CDR – and other organizations – receiving and paying out funds on behalf of ADAPT. In fact, in 2017 CDR fronted over \$38,000 for expenses related to the #SummerofADAPT. Additionally, although there were allegations that Mr. Darling told NCIL that ADAPT did not have a 501(c)3 in order to get the foundation funds, the documentation reviewed by the Board showed that both NCIL and the Ford Foundation were notified by Mr. Darling that ADAPT had 501(c)3 paperwork and an Employer Identification Number in an email he sent on October 3, 2017. He included copies of the paperwork in his email.

Archived emails demonstrated that on March 25, 2019 Mr. Darling provided the list of mini-grant recipients to his Director of Advocacy who was also involved heavily in ADAPT. When Mr. Darling determined that checks for the mini-grants and other grant-related reimbursements had not been disbursed, he prepared the checks and included an appropriate amount of interest with those payments.

Although the Open Letter indicates that “Mr. Darling finally paid back the missing grant funds to NCIL” in May 2020, this misrepresented the situation. Mr. Darling earnestly tried to send the funds to ADAPT and return them to NCIL. On February 15, 2020 when he was questioned why CDR had received and was distributing the funds, Mr. Darling wrote:

We received \$64,415.52 from NCIL. I will send a check to Nancy on Tuesday for the entire \$64,415.52.

CDR paid \$18,216.41 for ADAPT’s DIA reintroduction event last January on behalf of ADAPT. If ADAPT is willing to reimburse CDR, for the reintroduction event, I would appreciate it.

To be clear I was doing all of this as a volunteer who is part of the ADAPT Community to help - just like I’ve paid bills on behalf of the group. Frankly, we would never have been able to stop the destruction of Medicaid and Obamacare if we didn’t utilize those resources. We used to say our strength was being a “starfish” instead of a “spider”. That has changed.

Where there have been issues, it has been due to ADAPT’s own self-sabotaging internal drama. I’m hoping that this email ends the drama so we can get back to the work and FREE OUR PEOPLE.

Bruce

ADAPT made it clear they would not accept the check, so Mr. Darling had a check prepared on February 20th to return the funds to NCIL, but was instructed to seek legal representation instead. CDR voided the check to NCIL and then placed the funds in an escrow account with our law firm on February 26th. After months of conversation between the lawyers, extended due to the pandemic, CDR’s law firm released the funds to NCIL. Even though CDR had returned the funds, the checks it had written for reimbursed ADAPT expenses and mini-grants remained negotiable. Finally, although CDR had fronted \$18,216.41 for ADAPT’s DIA reintroduction event, the organization never received any reimbursement for those expenses.

This Open Letter allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

3. ...the Board allowed Mr. Darling to interrogate and intimidate staff in an attempt to learn how Ms. Hyten and Ms. Floyd obtained Board members’ email addresses.

Although the Open Letter alleged that the Board allowed Mr. Darling to “interrogate and intimidate staff,” there was no evidence that this ever happened. The link to the text messages – which was presented as evidence of his efforts to “interrogate and intimidate staff” – did not support this claim. In fact, in reading

those texts, it appears that Mr. Darling is warning someone that they may be blamed for the release of board members' personal contact information which violated Board policy on confidentiality. This policy covers the release of similar information about board members, staff and consumers which includes protected health information.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

4. ...in the past year alone, CDR and RCIL have lost dozens of employees due to Mr. Darling's unethical and tyrannical management.

The writers of the Open Letter listed a series of positions which staff left during the previous year or so, indicating that these staff left because of Mr. Darling. This claim was not supported by our understanding of the events as they unfolded or the documentation reviewed by our Board.

Although the list of employees who left the organization implies that these staff left because of Mr. Darling, a number of these staff never signed the Open Letter and none had indicated that Mr. Darling was the reason they left. The Open Letter also does not acknowledge critical factors that resulted in staff leaving during this timeframe. In early 2019, CDR became aware of proposed changes in the CDPAS administrative rate that would have dramatically reduced the funds available to operate the organization. The organization publicly advocates on issues like this, so the proposed changes were discussed with our staff. Although management had a plan to mitigate the impact of this proposal, everyone understood that some positions would no longer be financially viable under the new rate structure. A number of employees in these positions left the organization. Additionally, like many other organizations during the pandemic, we experienced resignations. Some people resigned because they needed to take care of their children and were no longer able to work. Others left in response to being called back into the office after they were allowed to work from home. Because we provide essential services, the bulk of these happened to us earlier in the pandemic in 2020.

As noted previously, some of the original signatories on the Open Letter are not employed with CDR for a variety of reasons that are entirely unrelated to Mr. Darling. These include:

- Being fired for serious misconduct;
- Resigning their position in response to investigations of misconduct or harassment;
- Resigning their position while addressing performance issues; or
- Never having been on staff or worked in our offices.

In reviewing archived emails, it became clear that over one-quarter of the original signatories had extremely limited contact with Mr. Darling, only ever receiving one personal email from him during their employment or, in fact, none at all. In reviewing the resignation documents, none of the signatories who resigned indicated that they were leaving because of Mr. Darling in their resignation letters or exit interviews, and finally, a number of these signatories specifically emailed Mr. Darling and others indicating other reasons that they were leaving and, at least in one case, thanking Mr. Darling for his support while they worked at CDR.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

5. Notably, Mr. Darling has failed to employ a full time Human Resources Director for at least two years. After the last full time Human Resources Director left, Mr. Darling "temporarily" assigned Human Resources duties to the Director of Quality Assurance. To date, a full time Human Resources Director has

not been hired, nor is there a Human Resources Director listed on the website. As a result, there is no reliable safeguard or path of recourse for staff experiencing poor treatment from Mr. Darling.

Based on the Board's understanding of the events through regular meetings and reporting and a review of source documentation, although the Open Letter alleges that Mr. Darling "failed to employ a full-time Human Resources Director", not filling the position was a management decision, not a failure. Initially, when the HR Director position became vacant, senior management decided to leave the position unfilled, get the department in order, and groom an existing staff person to advance into a more senior management position. When that didn't work out, the position was left vacant in order to respond to significant cuts in the CDPAS administrative rates as discussed above, and another Director assumed the responsibilities of the HR Director.

Although the Open Letter alleges that there is no reliable safeguard or path of recourse for staff experiencing poor treatment, such a system is in place. This was documented in a response to the Division of Human Rights prepared by Stephanie Woodward, Esq. when she was serving as legal counsel for CDR and responding to a DHR complaint on CDR's behalf. Finally, the Board reviewed a number of examples of staff complaints which were received and addressed.

Based on the review done by the Board, this allegation appears to be a deliberate misrepresentation of facts as understood by at least one of the authors of the Open Letter and was determined to be unsubstantiated.

6. This poor treatment includes... Assigning staff members to other departments without discussing the reassignment with the staff member or their supervisor first.

Staff were reassigned as part of two separate initiatives. First, in response to proposed state budget cuts reducing the CDPAS administrative rate, staff in financially insecure positions were offered the opportunity to try working in other departments in order to find them a safe harbor as the organization downsized. Second, staff were temporarily reassigned to ensure continuity of essential business functions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The board reviewed documentation, including archived emails, demonstrating that supervisors were notified and engaged in this process.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

7. This poor treatment includes... Calling Directors at late hours, often screaming.

Mr. Darling made the entire log of his personal cellphone calls available to the Board for review. The Board of Directors reviewed Mr. Darling's personal cellphone calls made at or after 7:00 PM during the 12 months prior to publishing of the Open Letter. This log demonstrated that during this timeframe Mr. Darling made 24 calls to Directors after 7:00 PM, and the latest he called a Director was at 8:59 PM. One third of the calls lasted one minute or less and nearly half occurred during the pandemic with one-quarter of the calls (6) happening on Sunday, March 29, 2020 – when CDR received word that an office based staff person had been infected with COVID-19.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

8. This poor treatment includes... Screaming at Pooled Trust staff for taking more than two minutes on the telephone to assist consumers with their needs.

The Board reviewed documentation covering a two-year timeframe. This documentation demonstrated that the claim was inconsistent with the documented expectations of staff. Additionally, in reviewing the emails, the Board saw evidence that rather than address individual performance by Customer Service Representatives with the CSRs themselves, Mr. Darling approached the issues in the department at a systematic level by:

1. Promoting a skilled worker to manage the team;
2. Working to ensure that CSR team is sufficiently staffed to accomplish their work;
3. Ensuring that the CSR management has the IT infrastructure they needed to support their team;
4. Providing direct coaching and training of CSR management in how to effectively manage the CSRs; and
5. Praising the team for achieving targets.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 9. This poor treatment includes... Forcing male staff to assist him with moving desks and other equipment at his will. For example, when an IT staff person moved his desk to a position that Mr. Darling did not like, he waited for the staff person to leave his office, then forced two other male staff persons to lift and move the IT staff person's desk to a position that Mr. Darling liked – all without discussing it with the employee's supervisor, Human Resources, or the employee.**

Management reported that all of the IT staff desks have been in the same exact positions that they were originally placed when the building opened in 2006. The allegation appears to be about a situation where an HR staff person moved his desk without permission so that it was inaccessible for anyone with a mobility disability to use or to speak with him as he was effectively barricaded in the corner. At the same time, again without permission, he arranged for the lock on the file room door to be reversed so that people could enter the file room, but could not enter the HR office with the door locked. This eliminated both the lock intended to secure the fileroom and a means of egress from the fileroom where a clerical staff person worked. Management reported that Mr. Darling did arrange for staff to restore required security, access, and egress. This involved the individual's supervisor and Human Resources.

Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that moving workstations was coordinated among leadership. As an example, Mr. Darling's Executive Assistant sent the following email on October, 28, 2019:

HELP WANTED

Looking for muscle to help move 5 desk hutch tops from the State St second floor to Frankfort St for storage. This week or next week, when convenient and the weather is favorable. One or two movers, please and thank you.

We have a commercial hand truck and a regular dolly.

Thank you,

LT

It was unclear why the Open Letter specified that the staff moving the furniture were male. In the response, management reported that non-male staff are also involved in office moves and provided a list of such staff. Finally, to keep staff who were working in the office safe during the pandemic, we did move workstations and repurpose public and meeting spaces for individual use. This was in response to changes in our understanding of the virus. Despite the urgent nature of the situation Mr. Darling involved other leadership. As an example, in an email to a staff person's supervisor and Director on March 18, 2020, Mr. Darling wrote, "I have asked JD to assist with moving furniture as we need to do that to ensure staff are safe during continued operations."

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 10. This poor treatment includes... Escalating a human resource matter to the point a distressed employee was treated as a terrorist threat to the entire organization. Mr. Darling denied bereavement leave to a Black, disabled man after the loss of the man's father. Mr. Darling, rather, relentlessly called the individual and inappropriately demanded he return his office keys contrary to policy and practice around employee possession of keys. Mr. Darling had other employees call the individual and even go to the employee's home. This caused significant distress to the employee, who experienced a mental health setback and reacted by threatening Mr. Darling. The individual was then treated as a threat to the entire organization and staff were directed to treat the individual as such. When the individual apologized for the personal threats to Mr. Darling, the circumstances were not conveyed to staff.**

CDR's Board reviewed extensive documentation related to this matter. The documentation demonstrated that the employee almost immediately was unhappy with his position when his supervisor sent the maintenance staff home to limit the use of overtime that week. In a situation that was well-documented through email, management was concerned that the maintenance man would be out for an extended period of time or might abandon his job, leaving the organization without the keys needed to access vital resources in our building. When he refused to provide the keys – after agreeing on the phone to turn them over – his employment was terminated.

Management explained that although initial threats against Mr. Darling and the individual's supervisor were not cause for serious alarm, the situation changed when the individual began notifying third parties of his intention to harm these individuals and the overall organization. The individual indicated this intent in an email to a third party subsequently shared with CDR. That email described how Mr. Darling would be "raped and tortured". In the email, the writer provided specific details related to the rape and torture of Mr. Darling and a timeline for the attack on CDR. This is considered "leakage of violent intent to a third-party" and known as "pre-attack behavior" by law enforcement. When police were notified, they suggested the organization take steps to protect the employees and consumers. Management followed this recommendation.

Finally, management reported that it had been unaware that the individual sent any email apologizing. Based on the Board's review of emails pulled from our email archive, it appears that the individual who threatened CDR emailed a staff person who no longer worked for the organization and apologized to that staffer "for being angry about what happened" stating that "loosing (sic) both my jobs wasn't your fault."

The staff person's supervisor, an original signatory on the Open Letter, would have been aware of the email apology because she had access to the email account where the apology was sent. In reviewing the archived emails, there was no documentation demonstrating that the email was forwarded or that the supervisor reported the email to her Director, Human Resources, or anyone else in the organization. Consequently, management could not have acted on the apology. Finally, it is important to note that the emailed "apology" ended with, "Tell Bruce he can eat a dick."

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 11. This poor treatment includes... Putting the entire staff at risk by continuing to come to work after being threatened personally with violence in response to his actions. Mr. Darling treated the entire organization as the target of the threats and failed to disclose his own role in the creation of the threat. This failure to take responsibility was exacerbated by giving vague instruction that staff be ready to protect themselves. While flaws in the building security, safety, and accessibility were acknowledged, no corrective action was**

taken to repair these flaws; yet, Mr. Darling made light of the situation and joked that individuals unable to escape – including a Black man in a power wheelchair – could be used by others as shields in the event of an active shooter.

There was no evidence that, in continuing to work, Mr. Darling put the organization at risk. Although the Open Letter alleges that staff received only “vague instruction,” staff were given very specific recommendations that included describing how people tailgate into buildings, instructing staff how they needed to wait for the security doors to close and latch before walking away, as well as other ways they could keep themselves safe. Staff were also provided with information on the Employee Assistance Program to give people resources to process the situation emotionally so they could absorb the information they needed to protect themselves and each other.

Although the Open Letter indicates that “no corrective action was taken,” management researched options for ensuring the safety of people in the event of an active shooter. Unable to find any models for this, Mr. Darling worked with our security company to design and install a system that would allow everyone – including individuals with the most significant disabilities – to independently secure themselves in an area of safe refuge in the event of an active shooter or other dangerous situation. In all, the cost of the security upgrades exceeded \$130,000.

The writers of the Open Letter were aware that the allegation they published is untrue. As evidence of that, on February 13, 2020 Ms. Woodward posted specific information on Twitter about the steps CDR had taken to protect its employees in response to these threats. She wrote:

Flash forward. A few months ago (after I quit) Bruce pissed off an employee. Employee threatened to kill Bruce. Bruce sent out emails, held multiple mandatory safety trainings for all staff, and installed dome security mirrors in the ceilings around the building.

*These are just the safety measures I *heard* of, so who knows how many more safety measures he's taken.*

<https://twitter.com/ISStepFunny/status/1228168719559315456>

Because this allegation is inconsistent with statements previously published online by Ms. Woodward where she disclosed specific actions the organizations had taken, it is clear that she and other signatories on the Open Letter knowingly published a false allegation that was intended to injure our business.

The allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 12. This poor treatment includes... Attempting to force the former Director of Advocacy to introduce an award winner at the CDR Gala in 2019. The former Director of Advocacy declined and informed Mr. Darling that she was attending the gala as a paid guest, not a working staff member. Mr. Darling stated that he was “directing” her to introduce the award winner at the gala, and she declined again. At the gala, Mr. Darling approached her table – where representatives from the City of Rochester were sitting with the Director of Advocacy – and, again, attempted to force her to introduce the award winner. Once more, she declined and stated she was not comfortable. Three weeks later, on August 6, 2019, Mr. Darling sent the former Director of Advocacy an email informing her that her actions were “insubordinate” despite the fact that she paid to attend the gala, was not working the gala, did not volunteer for the gala, and the fact the gala occurred during off-hours.**

While employed by CDR, it was a routine expectation that the Director of Advocacy participate in our Annual Gala and speak from the stage as part of this event. This is a common expectation of senior management in non-profit organizations. The Director of Advocacy performed this function until the 2019 Gala. A review of the documentation demonstrated that it was reasonable to expect the former Director of Advocacy to introduce Mr. Duffy at CDR's 2019 Gala because his award was directly related to her department. When Ms. Woodward refused to do the introduction, Mr. Darling arranged for someone else to do it.

As reported in the Open Letter, he did document the exchange in an email:

...on the afternoon of the ADA Gala, I had confirmed you that you were expected to introduce Bob Duffy at the event. I was clear that I was giving you a directive. That evening, Gregg took me aside and told me that you were refusing to do the introduction. I went to you and told you that you needed to go to the stage area to introduce Mr. Duffy. You refused and did so in a manner that guests at the table understood you were defying me, making them quite uncomfortable. Although I was polite about it, you were clearly insubordinate and I actually felt that you might be trying to goad me into losing my temper at the event.

Although the Open Letter complains that the former Director of Advocacy had received an email indicating her behavior was insubordinate, the Open Letter acknowledged that she refused to perform a legal, ethical, and reasonable directive from a supervisor when the directive had been clearly understood. This is the definition of insubordination.

The Open Letter does not acknowledge that the primary issue in the email to the former Director of Advocacy was that she was refusing to follow another directive from the CEO even though her actions had put the organization at risk of violating employment laws. Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that the former Director of Advocacy was aware that her actions on the other matter were inappropriate because she acknowledged this in writing less than a year earlier when she had done the same thing and was corrected by Mr. Darling which was documented in emails.

The allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

13. This poor treatment includes... Other employees have experienced being directed to “volunteer” for organizational events outside of work hours or experience negative consequences.

Management could only identify one potentially relevant situation. In that case, two exempt-level staff were urged to participate in an event outside of work hours. Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that one of the staff chose to participate and the other did not. A review of the personnel records indicated that there was no disciplinary action taken against the staff person who chose not to participate.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

14. This poor treatment includes... Refusing to meet with the former Director of Advocacy for over six months despite multiple formal meeting requests.

This is a complaint from a specific individual rather than an allegation of poor treatment of employees in general. Mr. Darling reported that he did not refuse to meet with the former Director of Advocacy, but that he deliberately chose to limit the times that they would speak privately. This was based a concern that she had inaccurately reported the content of their private meetings to third parties and that she had taken a

threatening tone with him. Mr. Darling acknowledged that their relationship soured when he was tired he didn't recognize that the former Director of Advocacy had been added to a personal text conversation he was having. This was documented in a timestamped draft email he was writing following the incident.

The allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

15. This poor treatment includes... Making comments on the Director's personal Facebook page in a trolling manner late at night.

This is a complaint from a specific individual rather than an allegation of poor treatment of employees in general. Mr. Darling admitted that, as an individual, he made funny comments on some of the Facebook posts that the Director of Advocacy made to promote the iLevel wheelchair which he felt were inauthentic and contrived, including commenting that a post looked like a paid advertisement. This comment may have been perceived as "trolling" because the Director of Advocacy, in fact, had an undisclosed outside contract which paid her to promote the wheelchair on social media and the photo was professionally done.

Mr. Darling has a Master's Degree in Public Relations Management from the Newhouse School and recognized that the Director of Advocacy was violating FTC disclosure rules by not indicating she was being paid for these posts. As the CEO, Mr. Darling had expressed his concerns to the officers of the Board at the Governance committee because these posts featured CDR and some were produced using CDR staff who directly reported to the Director of Advocacy and were not paid for their assistance. Additionally, Mr. Darling was concerned that at least one of these Director's subordinates was portrayed in particularly unflattering manner by her supervisor.

Although Mr. Darling has a personal right to free speech, he acknowledged that he should have refrained from commenting on Ms. Woodward's social media posts. Even so, his comments did not rise to the level of "poor treatment" of staff, and his concerns about the FTC disclosure rules appear to have been justified.

The allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

16. This poor treatment includes... Calling the individual's new CEO to complain about and harass the former Director after she had resigned.

Again, this is a complaint from a specific individual rather than an allegation of poor treatment of employees or former employees in general. On February 13, 2020 at about 11 PM Ms. Woodward posted a thread of tweets that included specific information about steps CDR took to protect the staff and consumers in response to a credible threat against the organization. Mr. Darling was concerned that these tweets would inflame the situation and put himself, other staff and our consumers at serious risk of harm. On February 14, 2020 at about 10:00 AM, Mr. Darling left a voice mail message for Ms. Kristin Brown, the CEO of Empire Justice expressing this concern.

The call was not intended to harass the former Director of Advocacy, and because there was a legitimate business interest in making this one call, it would not constitute harassment. Mr. Darling followed up with an email to Ms. Brown confirming the content of the call which was reviewed by the Board.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

17. This poor treatment includes... Refusing to return the personal effects of the former Director of Waiver Services.

Mr. Darling reported that the Former Director of Waiver Services is his sister-in-law and that he had the items at home because he believed they would be seeing each other to finalize his mother's estate. He provided a copy of the personal letter he included with her belongings when they were shipped to her.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

18. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Yelling at the Deaf Services Manager (a Deaf woman) for over 30 minutes, in the hallway, for the entire office to witness. When another staff member tweeted that this experience traumatized her, Mr. Darling forced her to remove the tweet.

The primary evidence provided in the Open letter is a series of tweets that are misrepresented as being posted on February 10, 2018, when in fact they were posted on February 10, 2020. Mr. Darling remembered two arguments with the former Deaf Services Manager. In both cases, Mr. Darling was frustrated because she was being deliberately insubordinate about changes that were being made to make her job easier. Email documentation reviewed by the Board provided context for the disagreement. The Deaf Services Manager's supervisor wrote, *"I realize this is somewhat different than where things were when we went on vacation but we feel this is the best move for the Interpreting Service and the agency. And, as I said, this will free up some of your time for other duties and responsibilities."* The Board noted the insubordinate email response by the former manager to her supervisor, *"I am not allowing this change."*

In regard to the deleted tweets, the text messages do not indicate that the staff person was forced to delete them or who forced them to do so. Because the supposed evidence had been scrubbed of any identifying information, including timestamps, this evidence was found to be less than credible. In reviewing the allegation and evidence, the Board noted that Ms. Woodward took screenshots of the tweets in February 2020 – before the person deleted them – and kept those screenshots for up to five months before posting them as evidence in the Open Letter in July 2020. This suggested that the "evidence" was manufactured or, at least, orchestrated.

Management provided documentation related to employees use of social media which is considered protected communication by Board-approved policy. Our policy precludes the organization from interfering in such communication by staff. Prior to publishing the Open Letter, no staff made any complaint about violation of this policy. Based on the Board's review, there was no evidence of illegal, hateful, or discriminatory behavior as alleged in the Open Letter.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

19. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Allowing two able-bodied men to receive the employment benefit of paid parking in Albany when they served as Manager of Government Affairs. However, Mr. Darling reversed a decision by the Manager's supervisor to provide a blind woman appointed to the same position with reimbursement for a monthly bus pass. This occurred despite the obvious fact the blind woman would be denied an equivalent benefit as she could not drive, and despite the fact that a monthly bus pass was markedly less expensive than a parking spot. After a time and much personal advocacy on her behalf, the blind woman's salary was adjusted, but not for the full amount of the cost of a bus pass.

This is a complaint from a specific individual rather than an allegation of hateful or discriminatory behavior toward employees in general. Although the Open Letter frames parking in Albany as being a comparable

benefit to an unlimited ride bus pass, it is more comparable to the parking that is provided to employees at the other CDR offices in Rochester, Geneva, and Corning.

By board policy, the organization does not pay for transportation to and from work. Even so, the Director of Advocacy made an unauthorized and undocumented agreement with the newly promoted Manager of Governmental Affairs that CDR would pay for her monthly unlimited ride bus pass (\$65/month). Documentation demonstrated that the Manager of Governmental Affairs had asked the Director of Advocacy for CDR to directly purchase the bus pass, but her supervisor decided to pay for it as a reimbursement which she could independently authorize. After the Director of Advocacy left her employment with CDR and Mr. Darling assumed supervision of the Manager, he questioned the reimbursement. Mr. Darling did not want to violate board policy or establish a precedent that CDR pays for employees' personal travel, including travel to and from work.

Although the Open Letter says that the situation was only resolved after "much personal advocacy on her behalf," the documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that the staff person spoke with Mr. Darling on Friday, October 11, 2019 and he resolved the issue on Tuesday, October 15, 2019. Even though the organization would have been under no obligation to abide by the unapproved and undocumented agreement between the staff person and her former supervisor, Mr. Darling resolved the matter and stayed within Board approved policy by retroactively increasing her salary by \$780, the equivalent of \$65 per month which was the cost of the monthly bus pass.

The Open Letter complains that the adjustment was not the full amount of the bus pass which appears to be based on the fact that the increased salary was subject to taxes, however Mr. Darling increased the gross salary by \$65 per week because he believed that as a personal benefit being paid to the employee for their personal services, the \$65 that had been paid for the bus pass was in fact a taxable benefit.

Although the Open Letter frames the issue as discrimination based on disability or possibly gender, a review of the emails demonstrated that the staff person did not identify that as a concern at the time. There was also no evidence that she was unhappy with the resolution of the matter until this allegation was published in the Open Letter.

The allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

20. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Insisting that Blind staff person take the stairs, even though the Blind staff person always uses the elevator and stated he was not comfortable taking the stairs, simply because Mr. Darling wanted to accommodate a visiting elected official.

Management reported that it believed this was when Senator Gillibrand visited CDR's main office in Rochester. Mr. Darling never insisted that anyone – including CDR's only blind male staff person – take the stairs during that visit; nor did he feel it was appropriate to force a U.S. Senator to use the elevator when everyone was pressed for time and she needed to have photos taken and leave quickly.

This was the first time that anyone in management or on the Board had heard about this issue. There are no records of the issue or complaints on file. The Board reviewed copies of the approved reasonable accommodations for the blind staff person which demonstrated that there was nothing on file identifying this as a requested reasonable accommodation. Based on available information there was no evidence of hateful or discriminator behavior.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

21. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Referring to transgender individuals as “he-shes” in conversation in front of LGBT staff.

Mr. Darling reported that, as a member of the LGBTQIAAP2S+ community who has experienced discrimination, harassment and assault because of his sexual orientation, he was appalled by this allegation. Although he acknowledged transphobia exists within the LGBTQIAAP2S+ community, he vehemently denied being transphobic and has never in his life used the term “he-she”. In response to this allegation, the Board reviewed documentation demonstrating Mr. Darling’s extensive work in the intersection of the Disability and LGBTQIAAP2S+ communities and his efforts to engage transgender staff in the development of CDR’s efforts to modernize our gender demographics in 2016 in order to be inclusive of non-binary people.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

22. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Questioning the validity of the sexuality of LGBT staff.

The Board recognizes the difference between homophobia and transphobia, but felt that documentation of Mr. Darling’s extensive work in the intersection of the Disability and LGBTQIAAP2S+ communities addressing the response to allegation #21 also addressed this allegation. Without specific allegations or documented complaints and given Mr. Darling’s personal/professional experience and expertise in these matters, this complaint lacked credibility.

Based on the vague nature of the complaint, lack of substantiating documentation, and inconsistency with Mr. Darling’s observed behavior over decades, this allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

23. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Refusing to respect the expertise and experience of the Manager of Deaf Services, a Deaf woman, on issues regarding scheduling interpreters for Deaf individuals in the community and intentionally overriding her decision making.

Management believed this related to the events surrounding the employment of a specific Deaf staff person. A review of the documents by the Board demonstrated that CDR was engaged in a process of determining which exempt-level employees would remain exempt – and have their salary increased in line with new state rules – and which would become hourly employees. The organization was using a cost-benefit analysis based on the actual time worked by staff to compare the potential overtime cost to the increased salary. The Deaf Services Manager failed to understand that CDR was engaged in an organization-wide process and took the review personally.

As part of that review, it was discovered that a staff person who reported to the Deaf Services Manager was not following CDR policies in regard to accurately documenting his time at work. When the CEO’s Executive Assistant sought additional information, the Deaf Services Manager pushed back and argued that the review was because the staff person was Deaf. The Board reviewed emails illustrating that the staff person responded negatively to being held accountable for the standard work rules of the organization which had nothing to do with disability status.

Additionally, the Board reviewed contemporaneous documentation of a situation where the Manager of Deaf Services felt the Director of Advocacy disrespected the Deaf staff when she replaced a volunteer ASL interpreter at the 2018 Gala with the (hearing) Director’s preferred interpreter. When that was addressed by Mr. Darling who was supportive of the Deaf Service Manager, she raises a concern that Deaf staff may

not feel supported in getting their access needs met. Mr. Darling referred the matter to Quality Assurance to investigate the matter. QA interviewed all office-based Deaf staff and found that the concern raised by the Deaf Services Manager was not substantiated.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

24. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Questioning the Interim Director of Advocacy on whether the Deaf Systems Advocate really needed to attend Disability Awareness Day and the NYAIL Lobby Day due to the costs of interpreting. Mr. Darling did not question the attendance of any other Advocacy Team member.

The Board reviewed documentation demonstrating that in January 2020 Mr. Darling – concerned about reducing expenses in response to the state budget cuts – asked the Interim Director of Advocacy to secure a local ASL interpreter in Albany instead of paying a Rochester-based interpreter for at least 7 hours of travel in addition to the cost of interpreting the meetings.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

25. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Minimizing the concerns and experiences of People of Color. When People of Color have expressed their concerns, and complained about Mr. Darling's racism, Mr. Darling has rejected claims that he is racist and minimized the experiences of People of Color by stating that he is Native American. He implies that he understands the daily oppression that people of color experience, even though Mr. Darling presents as white. While Mr. Darling may be Indigenous American through his genealogy, that does not equate his experience as a white man to the experiences of People of Color. Indigenous American through his genealogy, that does not equate his experience as a white man to the experiences of People of Color.

CDR's Board found no evidence that this happened. Although it would be impossible to prove the negative, the Board reviewed contemporaneous documentation of Mr. Darling's work to address racism in the Disability Community, including documentation of his work on the National Disability Leadership Alliance's statements on racism. Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that – although Mr. Darling does self-identify as multi-racial (Caucasian/Native American) – Mr. Darling did not portray himself as a Person of Color (POC). There was no evidence that he minimized the experience of POC, particularly Black and Brown people. In fact, it demonstrated that he used his experiences as a gay/queer white male ally to provide a bridge to helping other people understand issues being raised by POC.

Although our organizations are not perfect, the Center for Disability Rights was funded as a Center for Independent Living because Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) with disabilities in the Center City and Northwest quadrant of Rochester were underserved by Independent Living. We strive to be an anti-racist organization. For Council Members unfamiliar with some of our more public efforts, CDR posted the following blogs in the weeks before the Open Letter was published:

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/as-new-york-shifts-blame-for-nursing-home-deaths-advocates-tell-a-different-story/>

Although people in nursing facilities comprise roughly 0.4% of the population of the country, even the most conservative analysis suggests they account for at least 40% of the coronavirus death toll. "That just counts the resident of these facilities who died, it doesn't consider how these facilities serve as virus incubators helping spread infection in the community," said Dara Baldwin, CDR's Director of National Policy. "The virus doesn't just move in one direction. Although the state's Health Department points to staff bringing the virus

into the facilities, as infection spread through the facilities staff would have brought the virus back out into the community. Because most of the staff in these institutions are Black and Brown people, these institutions are helping spread the coronavirus through communities of color. That needs to be addressed with systemic change.”

July 10, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/blackdisabledlivesmatter/>

It is also vital that we signal our commitment to the movement for Black Lives to the community we live in. We are located in downtown Rochester, New York, an area where the majority of people are those most targeted by the violence of white supremacy. To make our position clear to those around us, we have replaced the banners at the front of our building. Our new banners remind all who pass or enter our building that Black Lives Matter.

July 1, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/we-support-dc-statehood/>

From the sign on letter: “Across America today, people are working to dismantle racist constructs and systems. With a majority Black and brown population, their fight for DC Statehood cannot be separated from the fight for racial justice.”

June 25, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/juneteenth/>

This Juneteenth we continue to strive for the day Black people across the world are truly free. We respect and honor the millions of Black lives who perished, struggled and paved the way for Black people today. We keep our eye on the prize for the safety, education, hope and liberation of Black people! We work every day to make a better life and demand all of the liberties that are Black people’s rights – civil and human.

June 19, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/cdr-statement-on-institutional-racism-police-violence/>

The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis is a tragedy, and the Center for Disability Rights (CDR) condemns it and the police violence experienced by the Black community. ... As an organization committed to advancing the rights of people with disabilities, CDR recognizes that the Disability Community cannot move forward if Black and Brown people, disabled or not, continue to face systemic racism. The freedom we are fighting for includes having the right to not live in fear of being killed at the hands of the police.

June 2, 2020

Attached is a listing of subsequent blogs we published that also either directly or indirectly address racism.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 26. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Refusing to provide reasonable compensation increases for Deaf services programs year after year, including the Support Service Provider and Deaf Communication Specialist programs which were both severely understaffed, leaving Deaf consumers without critical services and leaving the Manager of Deaf Services significantly overworked and over-burdened. Meanwhile, Mr. Darling was earning \$193,000 in 2018 alone.**

Documentation demonstrated wage increases were given to Deaf Communication Specialists even though they are funded under a fixed-amount grant that does not increase. Additionally, although the Open Letter alleges the “Manager of Deaf Services (was) significantly overworked and over-burdened”, documentation of her work hours demonstrated that this was not accurate. During the last 20 weeks of her employment as

an exempt-level staff person, she worked on average 31.29 hours each week, and 30% of that time worked less than 7.5 hours in a given workday (30 of 100 days).

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

27. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Refusing to hold men accountable when they make inappropriate comments. Women have complained about male staff who have made inappropriate comments. Mr. Darling's solution was to simply move the male staff to different offices.

The Board reviewed documentation of how management handled complaints against a male staff person (who was one of the original signatories on the Open Letter) raised by female staff working in the Canandaigua location during the pandemic (who were not signatories on the Open Letter). Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated the women's complaint was addressed by the man's supervisor and that he completed training on sexual harassment. To protect the female staff from potential future harassment or retaliation, he was relocated to a new office. Although this only added six extra minutes to his commute, he subsequently resigned his position claiming that the relocation was a "constructive discharge".

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

28. A few examples of his hateful and discriminatory behavior include... Denying disabled employees reasonable accommodations, even after receiving proper medical documentation, and sending communications directly to the employees' doctors without receiving consent from the employees. In one recent example, Mr. Darling refused to allow a manager who had been with the organization for 20+ years to work from home as a reasonable accommodation during New York on PAUSE, even after she provided documentation from her medical provider. Mr. Darling initially refused the accommodation because the employee's doctor only "recommended" that she work from home during the coronavirus restrictions. Her doctor wrote another letter after this stating that she cannot be in the office.

Documentation demonstrated that writers of the Open Letter were aware that staff are provided reasonable accommodations, and a number of the Open Letter writers themselves had been given reasonable accommodations or were involved in the process of approving them for other staff, including the staff person who this complaint in the Open Letter is based on.

In regard to the specific complaint, the board reviewed extensive documentation of the staff person's performance issues and the process of addressing her requested reasonable accommodation which was inconsistent with the published medical literature on COVID-19 at the time. Documentation demonstrated that CDR never denied her request for a reasonable accommodation, but was seeking clarification about the staff person's needs.

Ultimately, CDR's HR Director emailed the staff person to determine whether CDR would be receiving the requested information regarding her request for a reasonable accommodation from her doctor. She responded, *"I did not feel comfortable with my Dr sharing any additional medical information about my condition I am back in the office and working at this point"*. The HR Director confirmed with her by email that, *"Based on this response, we will be closing your reasonable accommodation request."*

Although the Open Letter states that Mr. Darling refused her request "to work from home as a reasonable accommodation during New York on PAUSE," documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that during the 8 weeks the Finger Lakes region of New York was "on pause", this employee worked only 1.5 days

in the office. The in-office work constituted just 4% of that period. She functionally received the accommodation while her formal request was being evaluated.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 29. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Denying disabled employees... requested FMLA on April 29, 2020. The employee then requested FMLA on April 29, 2020. After the employee submitted the second letter and requested FMLA, Mr. Darling intimidated the employee by sending a 38 page letter to her doctor without her knowledge or consent. In the letter, Mr. Darling disputes the doctor's medical judgment, inquires about any additional medical conditions the employee may have, defends the safety of the building, and attaches his "research." CDR never allowed the employee to take FMLA, forcing her to quit instead.**

The Open Letter alleges that CDR denied FMLA to the same staff person referenced in allegation #28. The Board reviewed contemporaneous documentation which demonstrated that this allegation was not accurate. In an email on April 29th, the staff person indicated her intent to use FMLA and said that her doctor would be sending the paperwork to CDR. CDR never received any paperwork from her doctor. Although the Open Letter states that Mr. Darling "intimidated the employee by sending a 38 page (sic) letter to her doctor without her knowledge or consent" in response to her request for FMLA on April 29th, the letter was sent to her doctor on April 27th in response to her request for a reasonable accommodation. (See allegation #28)

On Friday, June 19, 2020 at 2:00 PM the staff person met with the HR Director for an exit interview in the Human Resources office. During this meeting, at no time was there any indication from the staff person that she was denied FMLA which contributed to her decision to resign her position. Additional documentation demonstrated that during her last 25 weeks of employment, she received paid time off for more than 30 days – excluding holidays. This constituted nearly a quarter of the time she would have been expected to work during this period (24%). She never needed to take unpaid leave.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 30. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Refusing to approve vacation time for direct reports, even after multiple in-person and email follow up requests.**

This is a complaint from a specific individual rather than an allegation of unethical or potentially illegal activities toward employees in general. The Board reviewed contemporaneous documentation which demonstrated that after an incident when the former Director of Advocacy scheduled vacation without considering her potential work obligations, Mr. Darling exercised greater scrutiny of her leave requests. Vacation leave is a discretionary benefit and time off is scheduled based on the needs of the employer. Although he was exercising greater scrutiny of the vacation requests, Mr. Darling's actions were not unethical or illegal.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 31. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Forcing employees to sign work-from-home contracts (RCIL and CDR) with provisions that directly contradicted Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders during NY on PAUSE. For example, one provision required employees to agree that "the employer can make on site visits to the remote work location" which contradicted with the entire purpose**

of social distancing and working from home. If employees refused to sign this agreement they were forced to work at the office during the COVID pandemic.

The Board received regular and detailed reports on the organization's response to COVID-19. The timeline to transition people to remote work in response to the Governor's Executive Order reducing in-office staff was very tight. Mr. Darling needed to set up the agreements for the fast-approaching deadline while at the same time personally assisting IT staff with remote setups. In reviewing this allegation, documentation demonstrated that the Telework Agreements used by our organization were modeled on an agreement promoted by the Denver Council of Governments and used by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation:

<https://www3.drcog.org/documents/archive/Sample%20Teleworker%20Agreement.pdf>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/implementing-flexible-work-telework-compressed-work-and-flexible-work-programs/download>

Mr. Darling edited the telework agreements on March 20, 2020, making only minor changes.

The original agreement indicated that the "Employer must approve the site chosen as Employee's remote workspace." Management recognized that it would be impossible for the organization to approve worksites before deploying staff to remote work. Management adjusted the language in this provision to be, "Employer has the right to review, inspect and approve the site chosen as Employee's remote workspace."

Because the worksite was not being approved in advance, management was concerned that there may be a serious issue that might require immediate review. The original agreement read as follows:

"Employee agrees that Employer can make on-site visits (with 48 hours advance notice) to the remote work location for the purpose of determining that the site is safe and free from hazards, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve company-owned equipment, software, data or supplies."

To ensure timely access in an urgent situation, Mr. Darling removed the 48-hour advance notice wording so the telework agreement language read as follows:

"Employee agrees that Employer can make on-site visits to the remote work location for the purpose of determining that the site is safe and free from hazards, and to maintain, repair, inspect, or retrieve company-owned equipment, software, data or supplies."

Only one staff person expressed any concerns about the Telework Agreement: an advocacy staffer who transferred into direct services. Her director sent the telework agreement to the staff person on Sunday, March 22nd. She expressed a concern about the telework agreement, specifically about sending in photos of her workspace, but did not put her concerns in writing. Her supervisor, Ms. Coffey, addressed her concerns in an email on March 24th, and the staff person responded on March 25th that she agreed to the telework agreement. There is no record of the staff person further questioning her supervisor, taking the matter to her Director, contacting the CEO, or formally appealing any decision.

Although the Open Letter uses language that describes the allegations as "potentially illegal," it is important to note that the writers/original signatories of the Open Letter specifically claim that our telework agreements have "provisions that directly contradicted Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders during NY on PAUSE". This is a published statement, giving a legal interpretation that our Centers violated the Executive Order, that has been signed by two individuals using their legal title (Esq). They specifically cite the provision shown above, but based on our review of the Executive Order, that provision does not appear

inconsistent with the Governor's Executive Order. Nor do the writers/original signatories of the Open Letter identify any other provision or provisions that violate the order.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

32. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Sending directors and managers emails threatening them with prosecutions of fraud if they did not verify their staff's work time during COVID

The board reviewed extensive documentation of program staff who failed to meet long-established expectations about their productivity which was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This included complaints about calling elderly and disabled people served by CDR to check on their wellbeing. Some staff even refused to call these consumers, many of whom were in NYC which was the heart of the US outbreak at the time. Independent documentation (phone logs and timestamped service records) also indicated that staff were not engaged in work during the time they were being paid. Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that repeated efforts to get direct supervisors to address these performance issues were unsuccessful.

Ultimately, Mr. Darling sent a memo to managers reminding them that in approving timesheets, they were validating the work. One manager indicated that she felt "threatened" by this. The Board reviewed the extensive response Mr. Darling provided to her. Although the staff person framed Mr. Darling's email as threatening managers with prosecution for fraud, she knew that is not an accurate reflection of how CDR operates. One of her staff had previously been discovered to be falsifying their timesheets and program reports, but neither the staff person nor her supervisor faced legal action as a result of the situation. This was treated as a disciplinary matter with the staff person, resulting in termination of her employment, and a learning experience for the manager.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

33. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Forcing staff to work on assignments outside of their grant funding and, in some cases, outside of their agency – while billing the original grants for the work time. For example... During his last two weeks of employment, the Deaf Systems Advocate who was an employee of RCIL and was paid under ACCES-VR and other state funding, was forced to work in the CDR Pooled Trust while still writing ACCES-VR on his timesheet.

This allegation was immediately reviewed by the Finance Committee. Although the Open Letter alleges that the Deaf Systems Advocate – an employee of RCIL – was forced to work for CDR while being paid by ACCES-VR, documentation provided to the board demonstrated that this was not true. It is important to note that this temporary reassignment was done in response to the pandemic. To keep essential services operational, staff – including the Deaf Systems Advocate – with reduced workloads were temporarily reassigned to assist with those operations.

The Deaf Systems Advocate had been instructed to code his work to the correct department on his timesheet, but he did not follow these instructions and, instead, wrote ACCES-VR. When the Finance Department received his timesheet, they saw the errors and immediately corrected them. Although the Finance Department assumed that this was a mistake on the part of the Deaf Systems Advocate, this allegation in the Open Letter makes it clear that he understood he was completing his timesheet incorrectly. This suggests that he deliberately submitted inaccurate paperwork in order to establish grounds for this allegation.

There was no evidence of illegal or unethical behavior by Mr. Darling. It is, however, gravely concerning that the staff person appears to have deliberately submitted false documentation during the last two weeks of his employment.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

34. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Forcing staff to work on assignments outside of their grant funding and, in some cases, outside of their agency – while billing the original grants for the work time. For example... Staff working under ACL/RSA funding have been forced to work in clerical positions while still reporting ACL/RSA on their timesheets.

First, although the Open Letter alleges that it is inappropriate for staff who are paid with federal IL funding to work in clerical positions, CDR's Board believes that the independent living grants funded by the HHS Administration on Community Living and New York State ACCES-VR are considered umbrella grants and can support the full range of functions necessary to operate a Center for Independent Living. This may include clerical and administrative functions. This is important because these funds may be the bulk of funds – or possibly the only on-going funds – a center receives for their operations. Without the ability to use the funds in this manner, a funded Center would not be viable.

In our case, documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that during the early months of the pandemic, program staff with reduced workloads were reassigned on a limited basis to perform clerical functions needed to keep our essential services operational, including processing attendant payroll and Pooled Trust transactions. Consistent with our timekeeping policies, staff were instructed to code their time to the appropriate cost center and did so. When the board saw the Open Letter, this allegation was immediately referred to the Finance Committee and reviewed by them. It was determined that staff appropriately tracked their time and cost centers were established to ensure hours worked were correctly allocated and charged. During the review, management did discover that one CDR IL staff person did not correctly allocate her time when she worked a limited number of hours (totaling 7.5 hours) for another CDR department. In this case, the timesheet was not corrected at input, however upon recognizing the error the misallocation was corrected by management. Had the auditors identified the uncorrected error, it would not have resulted in a material change in CDR's finances.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

35. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Forcing staff to work on assignments outside of their grant funding and, in some cases, outside of their agency – while billing the original grants for the work time. For example... A staff person working under SSAN funding was forced to make "wellness calls" for Pooled Trust consumers instead of working on SSAN deliverables. The staff was disciplined when he did not make enough "wellness calls" and protested this discipline, pointing out that being required to spend 50% of his time making "wellness calls" for the Pooled Trust was in direct violation of his SSAN contract.

In response to the pandemic and the reduced workload that certain staff had, management decided that these staff could devote part of their time to contacting CDR consumers to check on their wellbeing, offer peer support and address any unmet needs. These calls included consumers who were served by all of our programs, including our Pooled Trust. Although the Open Letter indicates that all of the time worked by a staff person was funded by the Statewide Systems Advocacy Network (SSAN) contract, in fact,

documentation reviewed by the Finance Committee and Board demonstrated that only part of his time was charged to that grant. The remaining time was funded with general Independent Living funds.

Making these wellness calls clearly falls within the range of allowable activities done under general IL funding. Documentation further demonstrated that from April 2nd through April 10th, the advocacy staff person only made 48 wellness calls, totaling 1.86 hours of work. He worked 22.5 hours each week. Consequently, during this two-week period, he spent an extremely small percentage of his time (4.13%) making wellness calls to consumers, far less than the percentage of his time that was paid for by ACCES-VR.

Finally, although the Open Letter suggests that having this staff person contact Pooled Trust consumers was somehow inappropriate, documentation from the individual's personnel file indicated that his job title was "Pooled Trust Advocate".

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

36. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Insisting that the offices remain open during New York on PAUSE, putting all staff and consumers who entered the building at risk of exposure to COVID-19.

The Board has been integrally involved in the decisions the organizations made to respond to the pandemic, including which facilities needed to remain open or shut down, and management provided extensive and regular reporting on the steps taken to ensure the safety of staff and consumers during the COVID-19 pandemic while ensuring the continuity of the essential services provided by the organizations.

The Open Letter fails to acknowledge that we provide essential services and were formally designated as an essential business (under multiple categories). It was necessary to keep our offices open. Additionally, the Open Letter fails to acknowledge the extensive work we did to keep our staff, consumers and other visitors safe in our facilities. This work included:

1. Upgrading the HVAC systems by adding air exchange, sanitation, and humidification and installing professional-grade air purifiers at a total cost exceeding \$100,000 in an effort to bring our facilities to a level comparable to the protective measures used for hospital rooms.
2. Requiring staff and visitors to have their temperature taken when they arrive at our offices, and requiring any staff person or visitor who has or reports symptoms to be immediately assessed before they are allowed to work or receive service.
3. Ensuring our staff do appropriate hand washing, installing clocks with second hands in every restroom so staff would be able to time themselves.
4. Educating staff about the importance of using hand sanitizer; purchasing and installing 30 hand sanitizer stations in convenient locations throughout our building so staff and consumers could easily and regularly use it.
5. Consistently reminding staff to maintain appropriate social distancing to prevent or reduce the spread of the virus.
6. Providing masks to our staff, consumers and attendants, even organizing volunteers to make masks using a home-made mask design created by a doctor in China.
7. Significantly reducing the number of office based staff through telework and other measures.
8. Converting meeting rooms for use as private office space.

9. Converting our closed social adult day service program site into additional office space.
10. Utilizing videoconference and tele-visit technology to the maximum extent possible and eliminating in-person group meetings unless absolutely necessary, so that when these meetings occur participation is limited so that people are significantly more than 8 feet from each other.
11. Eliminating unnecessary travel among our offices located around the state to limit the spread of the virus.
12. Having staff who have travelled out of the area not return to work for specified periods of time based on the potential risk associated with their specific travel.
13. Establishing and implementing a rigorous schedule for disinfecting all high touch surfaces (including our door knobs, vending machines, and copier controls) so that they are disinfected twice during every workday – double what was recommended by the NYC Health Department when it was the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic.
14. Asking staff to leave their office doors open whenever possible during the workday to reduce the need for other employees to touch door handles.
15. Eliminating seating in our lobby so that seats are not within 6 feet of each other and posting signs indicating that visitors need to maintain social distancing. Adding clear plastic dividers between seats to further reduce the possibility of airborne spread of the virus.
16. Installing plexiglass shields at the receptionist desks and providing UV sanitizers for staff to sanitize their keys and cellphones.
17. Disinfecting and sanitizing all meeting rooms after any use (similar to how a medical office treats exam rooms).

Frankly, due to the leadership of Mr. Darling, we were often ahead of other groups when implementing these changes. For Council Members unfamiliar with the work we did to keep people safe during the early months of the pandemic, here are links to posts from our blog:

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/programs-services/thanks-to-staff-and-volunteers-cdr-distributes-more-than-1800-masks-to-consumers/>

May 12, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/center-for-disability-rights-cdr-regional-center-for-independent-living-rcil-june-2020-annual-membership-meetingby-mail/>

April 29, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdrs-pooled-trust-will-continue-as-normal-through-the-crisis/>

March 24, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/programs-services/covid-19-update/>

March 23, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/programs-services/covid-19-update/>

March 23, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-calls-on-governor-cuomo-to-waive-health-assessment-requirements-to-ease-the-workforce-shortage-during-the-crisis/>

March 20, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/tag-meeting-cancellation/>

March 19, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/notice-of-closure-cdr-services-at-the-edgerton-community-center/>

March 17, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/programs-services/covid-19-may-be-a-pandemic-but-cdr-is-still-here-to-help-you/>

March 11, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/coronavirus-covid-19-tips-for-the-deaf-community/>

March 6, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/coronavirus-covid-19-resources/>

March 6, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/policy-to-limit-the-spread-of-the-flu-covid-19-and-other-viruses/>

March 5, 2020

<http://cdrnys.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Policy-to-Limit-the-Spread-of-the-Flu-COVID-19-and-other-viruses.pdf>

March 5, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/programs-services/action-steps-for-attendant-service-users-in-response-to-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19/>

February 26, 2020

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

37. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... staff were exposed to COVID-19 and Monroe County instructed staff to quarantine for 14 days, however, Mr. Darling forced staff members to come into the building during that time.

The board evaluated this allegation based on contemporaneous reporting from management and a review of source documents, including email, attendance logs, and personnel records. Management also provided extensive reporting on the response to the notification that one of our staff had contracted COVID-19 both contemporaneously and in response to this allegation in the Open Letter.

It is important to understand that although people were expected to quarantine for 14 days from possible exposure, early in the pandemic when the first office-based individual tested positive for COVID-19, notification of possible exposure did not happen until well into the 14-day period. Consequently, individuals would only be expected to quarantine for the remainder of the quarantine period instead of a full 14 days. Additionally, our staff were working in a 20,000 square foot office and socially distanced. Because no one was keeping contact logs at that time, the initial recommendation was that everyone in the building needed to self-quarantine apparently based on the erroneous belief that we were a small group of people working closely in a small office.

We initially tried to resolve this by bringing remote staff and Geneva-based staff into the Rochester office to maintain our operations. When it became clear that this would mean we would not be able to complete

payroll for our attendants and home care workers, our Nursing Director contacted the Monroe County Department of Health.

MCDOH was reluctant to provide us the name of the individual for the purposes of contact tracing because he had been threatened by a coworker who responded badly to a group text from a supervisor notifying them of the quarantine requirement. It was a general threat made to the staff person's coworkers. However, that information gave us sufficient information to identify the individual and the specific people who could have been contacts during the two-day infectious period in our office. Our Nursing Director was able to get approval for us to bring staff who had not been in contact with the individual back into the office, however we decided that we would limit the number of people brought back into the office for a number of reasons:

- Getting conflicting directives would be confusing to staff and potentially undermine future compliance with safety measures;
- In trying to explain to staff why they could return, it seemed likely that they might figure out who had been infected and we didn't want to inadvertently release confidential and protected health information, particularly given the threat; and
- We wanted to play it as safe as possible and limit additional potential exposures.

A select number of people – no more than 15 people – who management could confirm were not in contact with this individual were returned to the office. The infected individual worked on the first floor. Of those that returned to the office, only three worked on the first floor. Of those, one was a Registered Nurse, one was a LPN and the third was the IL Director. Although they came into the office, these staff were still expected if at all possible to avoid any contact with people both inside and outside of the office. Additionally, none of our staff ever received a formal quarantine notice.

The only "evidence" supporting the published claim that we forced staff to break quarantine is a quote in a press release that was issued by former advocacy staff who had been supervised by two current Council Members. The press release read:

Precious Nubin signed the letter recalling poor treatment as an employee following possible COVID-19 exposure in the workplace. "All exposed staff were to quarantine for 14 days per State guidelines, but I was directed to return to the office within a week," said Nubin, a former Scheduler at All About You Home Care, a subsidiary of CDR. "If I didn't return, I was told I would have to work as a community attendant. I've never performed personal services for anyone! I was terrified because I had just been exposed to COVID and now was being forced to assist disabled people in the community, potentially exposing them too, but if I didn't, I would lose my job."

Although Ms. Nubin indicates that she "*never performed personal services for anyone!*", even a cursory review of her FaceBook profile demonstrates that wasn't true.

https://www.facebook.com/Preciouswalkingnfavor/about_work_and_education

In reviewing her personnel file, it was noted that her application and resume also clearly indicate that she had certification as a home health aide and had significant experience performing personal care. Although it was possible for her to not understand the quarantine rules, she would most certainly know her own work history, indicating that inaccuracies in the press release were deliberately untruthful.

Based on our review of documentation, including sign in logs and emails, Ms. Nubin was not instructed to return to the office. She was only in the office one minute when she erroneously returned to work and was immediately sent back home. Based on the Board's review of the documents, it is clear that the writers of

the Open Letter and the associated press release deliberately published sensationalized false information about our organizations intended to damage our reputation and business.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 38. Examples of Mr. Darling's unethical and potentially illegal activities include... Directing staff to participate in advocacy-related activities while treating staff as volunteers, such that non-exempt staff did not receive overtime pay, and all staff were improperly reimbursed for expenses, if reimbursed at all. Staff were expected to ask for paid leave to participate in Disability Rights "volunteer" activities, but activities not in support of ADAPT specifically were not encouraged. Meanwhile, inconsistent application of policies led to staff not only being treated as volunteers, but on at least one occasion, requiring staff to use vacation time for days that she was directed by Mr. Darling to go to Washington, D.C. for ADAPT work.**

The board reviewed our policy that allows staff to receive paid leave to participate in a range of activities in the Disability Community, including advocacy, educational and cultural events. Using this process, staff are able to request paid leave which is not always approved.

Management believed the specific case being cited was a staff person who had transferred from the Advocacy Department to work in our direct programs on November 11, 2019. The staff person made the request to use this leave during her second week of training. It appears that when there was a question about whether she would be approved to use leave under the "Leave of Absence/Paid Volunteer Policy and Procedure," she chose to take vacation during that time and go on the trip. Although we have no records other than the timesheet, based on a review of that timesheet this was approved by her direct supervisor.

Although the Open Letter alleges that Mr. Darling directed the staff person to go to DC, that is not true. She wanted to go and the Interim Director of Advocacy requested that she participate during an email exchange with our IL Director. Mr. Darling wasn't included in that email conversation or even aware of it until this allegation was published in the Open Letter.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

- 39. Mr. Darling used false statements and deception to seize all of the assets, business records and research documents of a legally chartered business partnership, the Coalition for Community Integration (CCI). In spite of request to follow the partnership agreement, and the rules for dissolution of the partnership, Mr. Darling continues to unethically operate the CCI partnership without permission of the legal partners, and in defiance of the business agreement. He has taken CCI partnership funds and added them to the bank accounts of the Center for Disability Rights. (from complaint to NYS AG/Charities Bureau)**

The complaint filed with the NYS Charities Bureau included three allegations:

1. Mr. Darling inappropriately seized the coalition funds;
2. Mr. Darling inappropriately continued to operate the coalition; and
3. Mr. Darling seized or stole personal property of coalition partners.

The board reviewed more than 100 pages of documentation related to this allegation.

In regard to the seizure of coalition funds, documentation demonstrated that Mr. Darling was an approved signatory on the coalition bank account, that he had previously written checks on the account, that the checks in question were consistent with previous reimbursement CDR had received from the coalition, and that he wrote two checks to CDR only after both of the other two signatories on the account had already left

the coalition. The documentation demonstrated that, although this was the first time that Mr. Darling wrote a check to CDR, it was a regular practice in the coalition for other signatories to write checks to their own member organizations.

The documentation also demonstrated that Mr. Darling appropriately continued operation of the coalition under the terms of the signed partnership agreement and repeatedly tried to resolve issues with Amy Hyten, the Executive Director of the Topeka Independent Living Resource Center. Documentation reviewed by the Board demonstrated that the notice from TILRC failed to meet the criteria for dissolving the partnership, and a revised partnership agreement of the remaining partners was established. Although not required by the original partnership agreement, Mr. Darling offered to split the funds that remained after the 2019 reimbursements with TILRC in an attempt to amicably resolve the matter. This offer was rejected.

Finally, the documentation demonstrated that although Mr. Oxford alleged in the Charities Bureau complaint that Mr. Darling still had their personal property, some of the property that they claimed belonged to the Regional Center for Independent Living, and the rest had been returned to TILRC seven months earlier.

This allegation was determined to be unsubstantiated.

In summary, after reviewing over 1,000 pages of documentation related to these 39 allegations, our Board found no evidence of hateful or unethical behavior, illegal or discriminatory conduct, or poor treatment of staff by Mr. Darling. We did, however, based on a review of original source documentation, determine that the writers/original signatories of the Open Letter published information that they knew was false and damaging to the reputation of our organization, CEO and board, including false allegations of criminal conduct. Even more disturbing, in certain cases, these former staff actually appear to have orchestrated the situations being identified in the Open Letter.

Although the writers/original signatories of the Open Letter complain about our organization and board being unresponsive, it is notable that none of the matters identified in the Open Letter were addressed using the internal systems for appeal and grievance even though they were aware of these systems. This was underscored by the fact that our systems for grievance and complaints were actually documented in legal paperwork prepared by one of the writers/original signatories of the Open Letter – Stephanie Woodward, Esq. – when she was serving as legal counsel for CDR.

Although the allegations in the Open Letter were presented as sensational claims, after reviewing them in detail many of the matters identified in the Open Letter were clearly complaints from former disgruntled staff. And importantly as noted at the beginning of this letter, although they have criticized the governance of our organization only one of the 28 original signatories was a member of our organizations and participated at the most basic level of governance – being a member and voting in the board elections.

It has also come to our attention that the writers/original signatories of the Open Letter are unwilling to remove people's names from the online document when they make such a request. Council Vice Chair Kathryn Carroll – one of the writers and original signatories on the Open Letter – was asked to remove an individual's name from the website. She responded to the individual's request:

"Your email is an unfortunate waste of your time and my time. You are rude, make an erroneous assumption about me and this "Open Letter," and go on to waste my time with your own summary of the letter, a description of your work?, and bullet points - BULLET POINTS - of some supposed positive activities at CDR, presuming I care. I do not care.

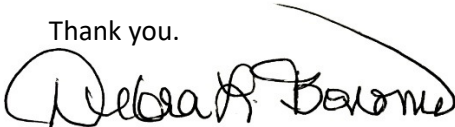
Do not contact me again."

The refusal to remove the individual's name raises reasonable questions about the validity of the names signed onto the Open Letter.

Our board takes its responsibilities seriously and works hard to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities to the more than 7,000 individuals who are dues-paying members and the communities we serve. To ensure that we meet our obligations, annually we approve a board calendar with specific committee deliverables, drawn from a checklist of board responsibilities. Each deliverable is due to the full board at a specific board meeting. Importantly, we not only assess our perception of our own performance, but hold ourselves accountable by reviewing whether we met the deadlines for providing all of the assigned deliverables to the full board. That review, conducted annually by the Governance Committee, indicates that we have an effectively working Board. In fact, we believe that few other boards – even those run by non-Disabled professional individuals – engage in this level of self-reflection, self-assessment and internal accountability.

We recognize that – at 30 pages – this is an extensive document, but it still only represents a small percentage of the documentation prepared for and reviewed by our board. Although it is not your role to monitor individual Centers, we sincerely hope this letter addresses any concerns you may have based on the defamatory allegations that were published about our organization.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debra L. Bonomo', with a large, sweeping flourish above the name.

Debra L. Bonomo
Board Chair

cc. Brad Williams, Executive Director, NYSILC
Bruce Darling, CEO, CDR/RCIL
CDR Board of Directors

Additional CDR Blog Posts Including Content Addressing Racism

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/center-for-disability-rights-and-the-daniel-initiative-with-45-organizations-on-the-need-to-strengthen-the-justice-in-policing-act-of-2021-jpa/>

May 24, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/its-time-to-get-vaccinated/>

March 23, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/center-for-disability-rights-and-the-daniel-initiative-and-38-organizations-oppose-the-justice-in-policing-act-of-2021-jpa/>

March 3, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-denounces-that-there-will-be-no-charges-in-the-daniel-prude-case/>

February 26, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/programs-services/center-for-disability-rights-thanks-imprintable-solutions-rochester-donors-for-replacing-defaced-black-lives-matter-banners/>

February 11, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-condemns-rochester-police-in-the-handling-of-a-young-black-girl-and-will-review-mayor-lovely-warrens-draft-of-reform-to-the-police-department/>

February 5, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/cdr-statement-on-the-report-from-new-york-state-attorney-generals-nursing-home-response-to-covid-19-pandemic/>

January 29, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-joins-more-than-100-advocacy-organizations-in-a-letter-asking-house-gop-leadership-to-address-its-members-who-support-white-supremacist-and-qanon-in-reference-to-committee-assignments/>

January 12, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/press-releases/cdr-statement-on-the-events-at-the-us-capitol-yesterday/>

January 7, 2021

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-condemns-the-murder-of-daniel-prude/>

September 4, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-celebrates-the-50th-anniversary-of-the-voting-rights-act-at-national-summit/>

August 17, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-joins-with-50-national-and-state-organizations-to-endorse-rep-gwen-moore-d-wi-bill-the-removing-barriers-to-basic-needs-act-h-r-7916/>

August 5, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-endorses-the-counseling-not-criminalization-in-schools-act-of-2020/>

August 3, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/center-for-disability-rights-part-of-coalition-that-declares-victory-after-cancellation-of-anthony-tata-hearing-calls-for-withdrawal/>

July 31, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/nearly-800-organizations-urge-congress-to-ensure-next-covid-19-bill-addresses-exclusion-of-immigrants-and-their-citizen-family-members-from-relief/>

July 31, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/independent-living-centers-write-to-senator-schumer-urging-disability-integration-act-in-response-to-the-pandemic/>

July 30, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/center-for-disability-rights-joins-155-civil-rights-organizations-urging-immediate-congressional-action-on-voting-rights/>

July 30, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/cdr-joins-the-world-in-mourning-rep-john-lewis/>

July 18, 2020

<https://cdrnys.org/blog/advocacy/we-join-amnesty-international-to-demand-freedom-for-detained-families/>

July 17, 2020