



**The Mission of the Rhode Island Disability Vote Project** is to mobilize the disability vote through building a nonpartisan and powerful voting bloc of people and organizations interested in disability issues.

There is no right more fundamental to our system of government than the right to cast a ballot for the candidate of one's choice!

**The RIDVP envisions a society where everyone:**

- Participates in government decision-making
- Receives access to the right services, living necessities, and recognition
- And is treated with respect, regardless of disability or any other factor

**CONNECT WITH US!**

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## Matt Flaherty: On This I Believe (NPR)

On March 8, 2011, Matt Flaherty eloquently spoke on the radio answering deep questions about living life with mental illness. Host Frederic Reamer interviewed Matt as part of the program *This I Believe - Rhode Island*. Matt did a great job standing up for the dream of recovery from mental illness, which is a reality for many, and needs to be for many more. You can listen to his interview at: [http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wrni/news.newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE\\_ID=1772737](http://www.publicbroadcasting.net/wrni/news.newsmain?action=article&ARTICLE_ID=1772737)



Matt Flaherty was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 19. He tells his story with poise and dignity. Matt is chair of the Save Our Mental Health Services (SOS) coalition which educates the public about mental illness and advocates for improved mental health care. He is also a member and an employee of Mental Health Consumer Advocates (MHCA)/Oasis, a peer support and advocacy center for people with mental illness and member of the RI Disability Vote Project.

*This I Believe - Rhode Island*, is hosted by Frederic Reamer and is modeled on a similar show from the 1950's - the popular radio series of the same name hosted by Edward R. Murrow.

In addition to hearing Matt's segment via the link above, you can listen to WRNI at 102.7 FM and 1290 AM.

## Department of Justice Law Suit

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently sued RI alleging that the State failed to provide voter registration opportunities to people with disabilities and people seeking public assistance as required by Section seven of the National Voter Registration Act ("NVRA"). Section seven of the NVRA requires "state-funded agencies" that primarily serve people with disabilities to offer voter registration to their clients. The law suit was settled and the State is now working to implement the agreement with the DOJ to comply with voter registration requirements. The RI Disability Vote Project is watching this implementation process closely and will share updates with members.

## Photo ID at the Polls

RI legislators are considering bills that would require voters to present a current photo ID at the polls in order to vote (S0400, H5680 and 5450). The RI Disability Vote Project and the ACLU, among others, oppose this legislation (letter of opposition attached to email). Contact the Vote Project for help to make your voice heard on this issue.

### Useful Links:

- Secretary of State lots of info (especially for voters) : [www.state.ri.us](http://www.state.ri.us)
- State House for General Assembly (House and Senate contact info, updates on legislation): [www.rilin.state.ri.us](http://www.rilin.state.ri.us)
- National Voter Registration Act: [www.eac.gov/NVRA/](http://www.eac.gov/NVRA/)