



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Peri Jude Radecic, Executive Director  
Arizona Center for Disability Law  
(520) 327-9547, ext. 323

### **Arizona Center for Disability Law Protects the Vote of Persons with Disabilities in Arizona**

**Toll free number to report accessibility complaints on Election Day  
1-800-927-2260**

**August 5, 2010, Tucson, Arizona.....**Did you know that federal and state laws require Arizona elections to be accessible? Polling places, ballots and election materials must be accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Arizona Center for Disability Law (ACDL), a non-profit public interest law firm, protects the vote of Arizonans with disability by safeguarding the right to vote through the entire election process.

"We want to ensure that state and local governments give all persons with disabilities full access to the electoral process. This includes registering to vote, accessing polling places and election materials, and casting a private and independent ballot," said Peri Jude Radecic, Executive Director of the ACDL.

On Arizona's Primary Election Day, August 24, the ACDL will be increasing its hours of operation to handle complaints about accessibility barriers and lack of accommodations at polling locations across the state. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to call the ACDL toll-free at 1-800-927-2260 or (602) 274-6287 if they experience problems with voting. Phones will be staffed from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Normal hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Radecic said that in the months leading up to the August 24 Primary Election Day, the ACDL has distributed voting rights information to the disability community and has worked with election officials to make sure that state and local governments comply with the law.

"ACDL staff conducted spot checks at polling locations in Yuma, La Paz and Gila counties. Accessibility barriers were noted, and we have been meeting with election officials to address accessibility problems at polling locations," Radecic said. The accessibility survey found barriers such as a lack of designated accessible parking and access aisles, slopes for accessible parking spaces that exceeded federal standards, and thresholds to doors at voting entrances that were too high for wheelchair access.

"We hope that our pre-election day activities will result in improved voting access for people with disabilities on August 24," said Radecic. "The Help America Vote Act (HAVA) continues to have a dramatic impact on the conduct of elections in Arizona and across the country, and the ACDL will be doing its part to make sure that individuals with disabilities have full and equal access to the right to vote," said Radecic.

The Help America Vote Act was enacted by Congress in 2002 to improve the administration of elections in the United States. A key provision of the Act includes improving voting access to individuals with disabilities. Under the Act, Congress appropriated money to state and local governments to:

- , remove physical barriers to polling sites,
- , provide information and outreach programs to individuals with disabilities about the accessibility of polling places, and
- , train election officials, poll workers, and election volunteers on how best to promote the access and participation of individuals with disabilities in the elections process.

In 2000, the United States Census Bureau estimated that there were 902,252 residents with disabilities in Arizona (19.3% of the population). The American Association of People with Disabilities estimates that 824,286 residents with disabilities in Arizona are of voting age and that only 278,609 individuals with disabilities voted in the 2000 election in Arizona.

*The Arizona Center for Disability Law is a not for profit public interest law firm, dedicated to protecting the rights of individuals with a wide range of physical, mental, psychiatric, sensory and cognitive disabilities. The Arizona Center for Disability Law is authorized under various federal statutes to ensure the protection and advocacy of all individuals with disabilities in the state.*