

**THE GLASTONBURY MLK COMMUNITY INITIATIVE & PROBUS
INVITE YOU TO ATTEND A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION**

**“Discrimination Based upon Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:
Rights and Remedies”**

**April 4, 2022
7:00 – 8:30 PM**

The Glastonbury Martin Luther King Community Initiative (GMLKCI) and Probus will host a Community Conversation on Monday, April 4, 2022, via Zoom, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This Community Conversation is entitled **“Discrimination Based upon Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Rights and Remedies.”**

Background:

An intellectual or developmental disability, also called I/DD, includes many severe, chronic conditions that are due to mental and/or physical impairments. I/DD can begin at any time, up to 22 years of age. It usually lasts throughout a person's lifetime.

People with I/DD have problems with major life activities such as language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living.

Developing a disability is unpredictable and can happen to anyone. Fifty-six million Americans, or 1-in-5, live with disabilities; thirty-eight million Americans, or 1-in-10, live with severe disabilities; and 1-in-4 Americans will develop a disability at some point before reaching retirement age.

Members of the I/DD Community may face discrimination in a number of ways, including in housing, employment, and health care. Connecticut law provides greater protection against discrimination than Federal law insofar as the State definition of “disability” covers more than the Federal definition does.

Almost 20 percent of the complaints filed with the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities are on the basis of either a physical or mental disability, making these two of the most frequent complaints received each year.

Moderator and Facilitator: Charlie Dobrow, President of Probus.

Panelists:

- 1. Tanya A. Hughes, Esq., Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO).**

Ms. Hughes is the Executive Director of The CHRO. The mission of the CHRO is to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights law enforcement and to establish equal opportunity and justice for all persons within the state through advocacy and education.

Established in 1943 as the Inter-racial Commission, the CHRO was the first state civil rights agency in the U.S. Today, it handles complaints of discrimination in employment, housing and other areas on the basis of a wide range of factors, including race, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation and immigration status, as well as complaints of racial profiling and bullying. The CHRO seeks to eliminate discrimination through civil and human rights law enforcement and to establish equal opportunity and justice for all persons in Connecticut through advocacy and education. The CHRO is responsible for enforcing human rights laws that ban illegal discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations and credit transactions, and laws requiring affirmative action in state agency personnel practices. The CHRO works to establish equal opportunity and justice for all persons in Connecticut through education and outreach activities.

Ms. Hughes was named Executive Director of the CHRO in 2013. Previously, Ms. Hughes served as the interim executive director, and 15 years as the regional manager of the CHRO's Bridgeport office. She has had a distinguished career at the CHRO, including four years as an investigator and staff attorney. Ms. Hughes was very instrumental in increasing staffing levels and improving relations with the public and other agencies. Since her appointment, she has been an active member on the Connecticut Racial Profiling Prohibition Project, leading to the CHRO's inclusion on the notification slip issued to drivers during a traffic stop.

Ms. Hughes was awarded a significant grant to conduct Housing Testing throughout Connecticut. During the 75th Anniversary celebration of the CHRO, U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal recognized the CHRO before Congress, entering into the Congressional Record the CHRO's many accomplishments in the areas of advocacy, education, research and assistance. The CHRO has resumed and strengthened its memberships with the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies and federal partners through EEOC annual and regional conferences, Fair Housing Association of Connecticut, annual Housing and Civil Rights training sessions, and developed a new Diversity & Inclusion Committee, while providing continual training during this unprecedented pandemic year.

2. Kimberly Jacobsen, Attorney, CHRO

Ms. Jacobsen earned a B.A. in Sociology from the University of Delaware and a J.D. from Western New England College, School of Law. Ms. Jacobsen began her legal career as a solo practitioner with an emphasis in family law, then as a Staff Attorney with Statewide Legal Services.

In 2001, Ms. Jacobsen was employed by the CHRO, initially as a housing discrimination investigator, and then as a Staff Attorney for the Workers' Compensation Commission. Since 2005, she has been employed as a litigation attorney by the CHRO, representing the CHRO at administrative hearings held before the Commission's Public Hearings Office and in a variety of litigation before State Courts.

Ms. Jacobsen is involved in the preparation of the CHRO's legislative proposals. She has a special interest in housing discrimination, breast-feeding rights, disability law, and mediation.

Much of Ms. Jacobsen's practice has consisted of assisting people with disabilities who have experienced adversity in their employment or housing, or who have needed reasonable accommodations.

Recently, Ms. Jacobsen has been speaking publicly about living well with Parkinson's disease. She has written an article for the Connecticut Lawyer's Magazine Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Column titled "My Disability Makes Me a Better Lawyer".

3. Shannon Jacovino, Ombudsperson, Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

DDS's mission is to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. One of its goals is to provide strong and consistent guidance to eliminate discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Its mission is to guide the individuals it supports, their families and staff in complying with federal plus state disabilities laws.

DDS endeavors to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

In announcing Ms. Jacovino appointment as the DSS Ombudsperson, Governor Lamont noted that "the position of Ombudsman is incredibly important because this person serves as an independent facilitator to ensure that individuals and their families receive the support they need to live, learn, work, and enjoy community life." Ms. Jacovino has great familiarity with the needs, challenges, and resilience of the I/DD community.

As the Ombudsperson for DSS, Ms. Jacovino will work with individuals, families, state agencies, municipalities, state lawmakers, and other stakeholders to help resolve their challenges with the department using a person-centered approach. She will also help individuals and families find information to solve specific issues and problems they may be having and help them navigate the DSS system.

Ms. Jacovino previously was the organizer for the Connecticut Congress of Community Colleges in which she represented the interests of more than 2,000 community college faculty, professionals, and students. She was previously the director of advocacy and public policy for The Arc Connecticut, where she worked with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, state agencies, and lawmakers to promote policy and legislation to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

4. John Hampton, Connecticut State Representative

Mr. Hampton is a 1984 graduate of Northwest Catholic High School and received a BA degree in English from the University of Hartford in 1990.

Mr. Hampton is a former staff member of the House Democratic caucus, serving as Clerk of the Joint Committee on Executive & Legislative Nominations from 2000-2004. Mr. Hampton created the Clean Energy Task Force, started the Simsbury Volunteer Expo, partnered on the Martin Luther King Simsbury documentary and celebration, and initiated Simsbury's Annual Holiday Collection for the Veterans Home in Rocky Hill.

Mr. Hampton served on the Simsbury Board of Selectmen from 2003-2012, including five years as Deputy First Selectman. During his tenure, Mr. Hampton was a strong advocate for transparency in government, environmental stewardship, and supported programs for senior citizens and veterans. In 2011, Mr. Hampton convened the first-ever Simsbury Senior Summit to raise the visibility of aging issues and to seek meaningful measures to improve the lives of senior citizens.

For his work on behalf of veterans, Mr. Hampton has been honored by the Abigail Phelps Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) with the Essential Piece Award in 2011.

As chair of the Simsbury Public Safety Subcommittee, Mr. Hampton worked with police, fire and emergency personnel on town-wide emergency preparation and response. He was also a member of the Personnel Subcommittee and served as liaison to the Aging and Disability Commission and the Simsbury Farms Complex Committee.

Mr. Hampton has also served on the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Aging & Disability Commission and is a Justice of the Peace.

Mr. Hampton's community involvement extends beyond Town Hall. A life-long town resident, he is active in the Tariffville Village Association, the Farmington River Watershed Association and the Simsbury Main Street Partnership. He created the Clean Energy Task Force, started the Simsbury Volunteer Expo, and partnered on the Martin Luther King in Simsbury documentary and celebration.

Mr. Hampton was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in November 2012 to represent the 16th House Assembly District of Simsbury. Rep. Hampton is a Majority Whip at Large. Rep. Hampton is a member of the Disabilities and the Impact of COVID-19 Committee, and a member of the following Committees: Finance, Revenue and Bonding, Children, Aging, and Commerce.

Rep. Hampton's presentation will focus on his role as Co-Chair and founder of the first in the nation legislative Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Caucus (I/DD), which has now grown to having more than 100 members. He will highlight their work serving as a voice and advocate for individuals and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as his role in forming last session's Bipartisan Commission on Intellectual Disabilities and the Impact of Covid-19, including significant legislation which has been passed and prospective policy issues being addressed.

Co-Host:

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization, formed in 2001 under the auspices of the Glastonbury Human Relations Commission. GMLKCI's mission is to increase knowledge about, and understanding of, the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King, and to provide leadership and active engagement to build an inclusive community. We believe that bringing people together to discuss openly and honestly important issues relating to social justice will help build a more inclusive and tolerant community. As Dr. King noted "...whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly..." and "...the quality of a community is determined by how members of the community relate to one another."

The goal of the GMLKCI Community Conversations program is to engage residents of Glastonbury and surrounding towns in conversations about social justice issues. We believe – especially in today's climate – that we must identify common ground between and among citizens rather than continue to exploit differences. In this way, we can foster meaningful relationships and dialogue and forge a better community.

Our goal is for our panelists to provide both a starting point and a resource for what we hope will be an inspiring, lively, informative, and thought-provoking conversation.

Co-Host:

Probus Greater Hartford is a non-profit, all volunteer organization dedicated to helping residents of Greater Hartford with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). Probus sponsors and organizes activities that provide opportunities for the I/DD community to interact with others through activities such as picnics, outings to sporting and cultural events, and holiday celebrations. Such activities provide opportunities for I/DD individuals to interact with the community at large.

Probus supports Special Education through scholarships and grants for teacher-initiated projects and offers financial support for camperships and vocational training. Probus volunteers work with other organizations, including Horizon's Inc., Special Olympics Connecticut, and Camp Courant, to assist their service to the I/DD community.

Probus is actively seeking volunteers to participate in rewarding activities & events, and new board members dedicated to expanding Probus' impact through equity and inclusion. For more information or to contribute, please visit www.hartfordprobus.org.

Probus also contributes financially to such projects, which include contributions to the Special Olympics, Special Education scholarships, camperships, and other services and equipment for people with disabilities. Funds are raised through direct appeals, grant applications, balloon sales, tag sales, candy sales, raffles, and auctions. Assisting the I/DD community is its focus, as well as advocating for social justice for all people.

Registration for this Community Conversation is required. To register please log onto the Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative's web page at www.glastonburymlkci.org and click on "Register," or use the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/ha3w9hyj>. If you have any difficulty registering, please email Leslie at leslieohta@gmail.com and she will register for you.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar.

For additional information or to contribute, please contact Leslie Ohta at 202-538-1161 or at leslieohta@gmail.com or visit www.glastonburymlkci.org.

The Glastonbury MLK Community Initiative is supported by the Town of Glastonbury.