



Photo Credit: James Seddon

## **IT'S OFFICIAL!**

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy visited Favarh in Canton June 29<sup>th</sup> to sign legislation to modernize accessibility signs, helping to improve the public image of people who need accessible parking or restrooms. Seated from left are Jonathan Slifka, the governor's liaison to the disability community; Gov. Malloy; and Todd Theriault, one of the two Favarh self-advocates who were instrumental in developing the modernization concept. Standing from left are Morna Murray, commissioner of the state Department of Developmental Services; State Rep. Mike Demicco of Farmington; Augusto Russell, president of the Favarh Board of Directors; Dan Fiorentino, son of Tom Fiorentino, co-chair of the Governor's Working Group on the Residential Waiting List; Lauren Traceski, the other Favarh self-advocate responsible for the sign concept; Favarh Executive Director Stephen E. Morris; and State Sen. Kevin Witkos of Canton.



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## **It's Official: Gov. Malloy Visits Favarh to Sign Legislation Modernizing Accessible Parking Signs**

CANTON, June 29, 2016 – Gov. Dannel P. Malloy today made it official: Using Favarh's accessible parking spaces as a backdrop, he signed legislation modernizing Connecticut's reserved parking signs for those with accessibility needs.

Favarh was instrumental in pushing for the change, introducing the concept at a State Capitol news conference last September after self-advocates, Lauren Traceski and Todd Theriault, expressed concern about the public image of the so-called disabled due to the existing signs.

"Lauren and Todd expressed the same concern that we've heard from many people in their situation make over the years," said Favarh Executive Director Stephen E. Morris. "The signs, known generally as 'handicapped signs,' weren't representative of people with capabilities. The signs also used the word, 'handicapped,' which is demeaning to those who need to use the reserved parking spaces."

Instead of the iconic stick figure in a wheelchair, the new signs will depict a figure in wheelchair leaning forward to emphasize the capabilities of people with accessibility needs. Instead of the words "Handicapped Parking," the new signs will use the words, "Reserved Parking."

"Connecticut for decades has been at the forefront in fighting discrimination against persons with disabilities, and adopting this modernized symbol and updated language is a simple step that can go a long way towards changing attitudes and raising awareness," Gov. Malloy said. "This is another way Connecticut is leading, and I am proud to sign this bill into law. I want to thank the residents who approached my office with this proposal and the legislators who voted in favor of this update."

"We're very grateful to Gov. Malloy for his support for the modernization and in fact for sponsoring the bill that was approved by the Connecticut legislature on the final day of the 2016 legislative session," said Morris. "It will go a long way to change the public image of people with accessibility needs, while simultaneously reinforcing that the reserved parking spaces are explicitly for those who need them."

Gov. Malloy signed the legislation at a table placed between two of the new accessibility signs in Favarh's parking lot. He was flanked by Traceski and Theriault.



There will be no additional cost for the new signs. They will be required only for new construction or for worn-out signs that need to be replaced.

Favarh (pronounced "FAY-var") was founded in 1958 by eight local families who all wanted a better life for their children with intellectual disabilities. Today, Favarh is a local chapter of the Arc, the world's largest community-based organization for people with intellectual, physical and developmental disabilities. Favarh supports more than 350 children, young adults, adults, seniors and families throughout the Greater Farmington Valley area and beyond.

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