

Able South Carolina

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Advocacy Day for Access & Independence at the South Carolina Statehouse

Details on speakers, event activities, and symbolic locks and keys given to lawmakers.

COLUMBIA, SC (March 17, 2026) – The SC Access & Independence Network, in association with the SC Statewide Independent Living Council, will host their annual Advocacy Day for Access & Independence on Tuesday, April 14, 2026, from 10 am to 12 pm at the SC Statehouse. The event will also be live-streamed online to viewers worldwide.

The annual Advocacy Day for Access & Independence will allow the disability community, advocates, and supporters to rally and call on South Carolina lawmakers to address barriers to independence for people with disabilities. The 2026 issue area of focus is Community Living. Community Living will be defined by the ways in which barriers to employment, transportation, housing, and healthcare affect the ability of disabled people to live self-sufficiently in their communities of choice.

The 1 in 3 people with disabilities living in South Carolina are ready to advocate for increased access to employment, transportation, housing, and healthcare, as well as assurance that their rights will be protected. Policies regarding people with disabilities across our state encourage dependence on state programs and the government instead of promoting independence and self-sufficiency. South Carolinians with disabilities are often discriminated against in all matters of daily life. Advocacy Day for Access and Independence will hold the megaphone as disabled people rally on these issues, with the goal of improving the lives of disabled and nondisabled South Carolinians alike!

Advocacy Day for Access & Independence was created as part of the State Plan on Independent Living with the support of over 75 organizations statewide to unlock the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from having equal access and opportunity.

The goal of the event on the North Steps of the Statehouse will be to unlock the barriers to independence that people with disabilities experience. The rally will include several speakers with disabilities and their political and business allies. Speakers include James Bowers, a student from ClemsonLIFE; Jennifer Bazer of SC Works; speakers from CoverSC and SC Tenant Union; and many other leaders and advocates from the disability community.

Event participants will have the opportunity to listen to and engage with speakers, a poster-making and event shirt advocacy message and stamp decorating station, and a postcard-writing station. Event t-shirts will be supplied to visitors while supplies last. Postcards written to lawmakers during the event will be returned to lawmakers' offices shortly after the event ends.

These postcards will be outfitted with small keys. The keys unlock mini-padlocks attached to issue-area packets, to be delivered to lawmakers on April 7th. This powerful symbol, using the words of people with disabilities to unlock the barriers reported to lawmakers, is sure to garner the attention of South Carolina's elected officials.

"We Want Access! We Want Independence! We Want Equality!" Search www.unlockingbarriers-sc.org for more, and follow our hashtag #BarrierFreeSC on social media. Find our official Facebook page at [SC Access & Independence Network](#).

Participants may register/sign up to support this free event at www.unlockingbarriers-sc.org or by calling 800-681-7715 or via the TTY line at (803) 779-0949. Free materials, including t-shirts and buttons, will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis. A refreshment station will be available to accommodate those with dietary needs during the event.

[Read the official Advocacy Guide outlining the issues and what lawmakers can do.](#)

[Review our promotional video about the issues.](#)

SC ACCESS & INDEPENDENCE NETWORK SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS:

Able SC, AccessAbility, ACLU of SC, AgrAbility SC, Babcock Center Inc., Barbara Stone Foundation, Beginnings SC, Beyond BASIC, Billion Strong, Brain Injury Association of South Carolina, BRIDGED, CarolinaLIFE, CharlestonLIFE, ClemsonLIFE, CoastalLIFE, Columbia College, Columbia Urban League, The COMET, CoverSC, Cypress Fund, Dance Collaborative, Disability Next Door SC, Disability Rights South Carolina, Equal Accessibility & Support Everywhere, Inc. (EASE), Equip, Family Connection of SC, Grand Strand Miracle Leagues, Gullah Geechee Chamber of Commerce, Harriet Hancock Center, Healthy Laughter, HEART Inclusive Arts Community, Hire Me SC, The Hive Community Circle, IMPACT SC, Limitless Community Development, Lions Vision Services, McGuireWoods Consulting, Mental Health America SC, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), National Federation of the Blind of South Carolina, National MS Society, Northeast Columbia Empowerment Coalition, PAALS (Palmetto Animal Assisted Life Services), Palmetto Council of the Blind, PASOs, Project SEARCH, SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center, SC Assistive Technology Program, SC Association of the Deaf, SC Commission for Minority Affairs, SC Department of Mental Health, SC Department on Aging, SC Developmental Disabilities Council, SC IPSEC: SC Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium, SC NAACP, SC Spinal Cord Injury Association, SC Statewide Independent Living Council, SC Tenant Union, SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department, Thrive Upstate, Together SC, United States Attorney's Office District of South Carolina, Upstate SC LGBT Chamber of Commerce, USCA LIFE, USC Aphasia Lab, USC Center for Disability Resources, USC Center for Transition Research and Leadership, USC Delta Alpha Pi, USC School of Medicine, Walton Options, WinthropLIFE, Work in Progress, WREN (Women's Rights Empowerment Network), Youth Leadership Forum SC, YMCA Columbia, and York CAN

ABOUT ABLE SOUTH CAROLINA

Able SC is a disability-led organization seeking transformative change across systems, communities, and individuals. Since 1994, we've remained a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability nonprofit that seeks to make South Carolina a national model of equity and inclusion for all people with disabilities. To learn more about Able SC's programs and services, please visit www.able-sc.org.

ABOUT SOUTH CAROLINA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL

The South Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting Independent Living for people with disabilities throughout the state. SILC members are appointed by the Governor of South Carolina. Federal regulations requires at least 51% of SILC members be people with significant disabilities. The South Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

promotes the independent living philosophy of consumer choice, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and systems advocacy.

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