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Dr. Timothy Shriver to Bestow Awards at DRM's Breaking Barriers Gala

Baltimore, Md.—Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is pleased to announce that **Dr. Timothy Shriver** will honor DRM by bestowing its annual disability rights advocacy awards to its honorees at the 2019 Breaking Barriers Awards Gala on September 18, 2019 at the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM). In addition to honorees Senator Van Hollen, Vanita Gupta, and Erica L. Green, **Patricia Saylor** will be the recipient of DRM's Gayle Hafner Grassroots Advocacy Award, **Stephanie P. Hales**, Partner, **Sidley Austin, Jennifer J. Bruton**, Partner and **Daniel J. O'Brien**, Associate, **Venable, LLP** will each be the recipient of DRM's Legal Advocacy Award.

Dr. Shriver is the Chairman of Special Olympics and serves with over six million Special Olympic athletes and their families in 174 countries. As Chairman, Shriver spearheaded the largest single expansion of the Special Olympics International program, growing its numbers from one million to six million athletes and Unified partners, resulting in an inclusion revolution around the world. Since 1996, Shriver has led the evolution of Special Olympics from a sports organization *for* people with intellectual disabilities to a global movement *from* people with intellectual disabilities using sports and more for radical inclusion.



Dr. Shriver, a fierce advocate for all people with intellectual disabilities, is a long time champion for Marylanders with disabilities. He was instrumental in the establishment of the Unified Maryland Sports program inspired by the passage of the 2008 Maryland Fitness and Athletics Equity for Students with Disabilities Law. DRM was active in drafting this law which was the first of its kind in the U.S. and a model for other states. Unified Sports teams are comprised of an equal number of students with intellectual disabilities, other types of disabilities, and students without disabilities who train and compete together. To date, over 3,000 students have taken part in Unified Sports programs throughout Maryland public schools, and the program has grown to 1.4 million participants worldwide.

Dr. Shriver served from 2013 to 2015 as Chairman of the Commission for Effective Community Inclusion of Individuals with Intellectual and Development Disabilities. DRM's Advocate, Theresa R. Sparks was also a member of the Commission.

Patti Saylor will be recognized for her leadership in galvanizing public opinion to action following the tragic death of her son, Ethan Saylor, in 2013. Ms. Saylor's advocacy resulted in an executive order by Governor O'Malley to establish the Commission for the Effective Community Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities. Consequently, the Commission's two year tenure resulted in Ethan Saylor's Alliance for Self-Advocates as Educators, and required mandatory initial and ongoing training for all law enforcement officers related to their interactions with individuals with disabilities. Robin Murphy, executive director of DRM stated, "**Patti is a remarkable individual whose service on national, state, and local boards, committees and councils, makes her an exceptional leader and role model in advocating for inclusion of people with disabilities.**"



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

March 14, 2019

CONTACT:Robin Murphy, Executive Director,
410-727-6352, ex: 2482 | RobinM@DisabilityRightsMD.org**DRM Honors Erica L. Green, Vanita Gupta, and the Honorable Chris Van Hollen**

Baltimore, Md.—Disability Rights Maryland (DRM) is proud to announce that **Erica L. Green**, Correspondent for *The New York Times* Washington Bureau, is the recipient of DRM's *Excellence in Journalism Award*, **Vanita Gupta**, president and CEO of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, is the recipient of DRM's *Champion of Justice Award*, and **The Honorable Chris Van Hollen**, United States Senator of Maryland, is the recipient of DRM's *Public Policy Award*. All three awardees will be honored at the Breaking Barriers Award Gala on September 18, 2019, at the American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) in Baltimore, Maryland.

Ms. Green is being recognized for her award-winning coverage of investigations into the Baltimore City school system. Now at the *Times*, her cutting-edge reporting has helped to safeguard the civil rights of students with disabilities in the nation's schools. Robin Murphy, executive director of DRM, stated, "Erica's coverage of Baltimore City Public Schools, the juvenile justice system, school segregation and her role on the Sun team, which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize finalist award for coverage of the tragic death of Freddie Gray, has lifted a heavy curtain and exposed the challenging reality of conditions in schools for children with disabilities."



Ms. Gupta is being recognized for her national leadership in advancing civil rights and access to opportunity for all, and for her dedication to protecting the rights of people with disabilities. "She relentlessly opposes all forms of discrimination," said Ms. Murphy. "The number of people with disabilities whose lives have been directly and significantly impacted by her work is countless." At The Leadership Conference, Ms. Gupta spearheads the fight for justice, inclusion, and democracy. Previously, she served as the U.S. Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General and led the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice. Under her leadership, the Civil Rights Division vigorously protected and promoted disability rights, creating meaningful change for thousands of Americans with disabilities.



Senator Van Hollen is being recognized for his unwavering commitment to disability rights for more than two decades of service to the people of Maryland, first in Annapolis, and then in Congress. Ms. Murphy said, "Senator Van Hollen is a tremendous ally of the disability rights community. He has consistently supported access and inclusion, leading both by example and by his tireless work to pass state and federal legislation that has made a real difference in the lives of Marylanders with disabilities."



In Congress, Van Hollen was part of a small bipartisan group that introduced and passed the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act, which created tax-free savings accounts for individuals with disabilities. He is a vocal advocate for increased funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education

Act, and he has introduced numerous legislative proposals aimed at supporting Americans with disabilities. He has also served as co-chair of the Congressional Down Syndrome Caucus.

Disability Rights Maryland is the federally mandated Protection & Advocacy organization charged with advancing and defending the rights of Marylanders of all ages statewide, with all types of disabilities. DRM works to create a just and inclusive society by advancing and defending the legal and human rights of people with disabilities. DRM partners with advocates and people with disabilities to promote and expand opportunities for people with disabilities in all aspects of community life, regardless of income, age or race.

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