For Immediate Release -

**Governor Malloy:**

**October 15th is Blind Americans Equality Day in Connecticut**

Governor Dannel Malloy has officially declared Wednesday, October 15th, 2015 to be “Blind Americans Equality Day”.  Beginning in 1964, October 15th has been recognized as White Cane Safety Day, a day to increase society’s awareness of the challenges of blindness.  In recent years, the day has become known as “Blind Americans Equality Day”.  “I am happy to continue the tradition of recognizing the challenges faced by people who are blind and to honor their resilience and success. We as a state are committed to the independence and equality of our many friends and neighbors who are blind,” Governor Malloy said.

“I join the Governor in celebrating the achievements of the many thousands of Connecticut’s citizens with blindness,” Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman said today.  “Their success serves as a testament to their energy and their ambition to overcome obstacles and adversity,” added the Lieutenant Governor.

The proclamation reads, in part, “Connecticut’s citizens who are blind or visually impaired contribute much to our state,” and points out that “Connecticut law further encourages employers, in both the public and private sectors, to explore and utilize the skills and potential of Connecticut’s citizens who are blind, to recognize their capabilities and to respect their worth as individuals.”

“In addition to employers, I encourage all of Connecticut’s people to renew their commitment to full opportunity and inclusion for people with blindness,” Malloy said.  “And consistent with the purpose of the original White Cane Safety Day, I remind all citizens to redouble their awareness of and attention to the safety of people with blindness travelling on our sidewalks and streets every day,” the Governor added.

“I want to congratulate Governor Malloy for his ongoing recognition of the challenges faced by people with blindness,” said Amy Porter, Commissioner of the Department of Rehabilitation Services which houses the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind.  “I also want to commend his resolve to help all people, including people who are blind, achieve independence and success,” she added.

Starting this year, the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) is offering special bumper stickers to the public that inform motorists of the importance of stopping and yielding to pedestrians who are blind.  Any member of the public may join this important safety effort by calling the Department at (860) 602-4160 for a free bumper sticker. The sticker reads “It’s the Law! Stop for Pedestrians with Guide Dogs and White Canes.”

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