


Advocating in the Community



BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS


LAURENCE P. OSBAND 2009



The needs of the many...
out weight the needs of
the few...or the one

Mr. Spock , Vulcan , First Officer, Star Fleet

Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan



“The needs of the
one outweigh the
needs of the many.”

Admiral James T. Kirk , Star Fleet

Star Trek III: The Search for Spock

ADVOCATE



- recommend: push for something;
- preach: speak, plead, or argue in favor of;
- a lawyer who pleads cases in court

Self-advocacy

- Self-advocacy means advocating on one's own behalf. It is the root of all social activist movements. The self-advocacy movement was started by and for people with developmental disabilities because they wanted to be their own advocates rather than having others, such as professionals, parents and other family members, and advocates with or without other disabilities, speak about their needs and desires.

Self-advocacy



- As part of the broader disability rights/independent living movement, the self-advocacy movement is first and foremost a civil rights movement. As with all social activist movements, self-advocacy started at the grass-roots level where local leadership was drawn upon to organize groups of people to stand up and speak with a goal to effect social change.

Lobbyist



A person or group that receives financial gain in advocating for a cause, project, or law

Lobbyist



- Paid Lobbyists are required to register with County Administration before lobbying the Board of County Commissioners, any County advisory board member or County employee. According to Ordinance No. 2003-018, a lobbyist is any person who is employed and receives payment, or contracts for economic consideration for the purpose of lobbying on behalf of a Principal in order to influence the decision of any County Commissioner, County advisory board member or County employee. Registration forms are available in the County Administration Office located on the 11th floor, Government Center, 301 N. Olive Ave., West Palm Beach, Florida or on the County web page at www.pbcgov.com.

Keys to Advocacy



- Know the issue you wish to speak about
- Contact the correct people
- Be at the correct meeting for the topic

Keys to Advocacy



- **Know the rules and policies of the meeting**
 - Are public comments heard at every meeting or only once or twice a month
 - Are Comment cards required
 - When in the meeting are comments heard
 - Must you speak or can your comments be read

Keys to Advocacy



Stay on point

WAYS TO ADVOCATE



- Personal Visit
- Write a Letter
 - Postal Service (snail mail)
 - Fax
- E-Mail
- Telephone
- Twitter
- Social network sites

WAYS TO ADVOCATE



- What becomes part of public record

Freedom of Information Act



- The Freedom of Information Act generally provides that any person has a right, enforceable in court, to obtain access to federal agency records, except to the extent that such records (or portions of them) are protected from public disclosure by one of nine exemptions or by one of three special law enforcement record exclusions.

Freedom of Information Act



- Under subsection (a)(3) of the FOIA -- by far the most commonly utilized part of the Act -- all records not made available to the public under subsections (a)(1) or (a)(2), or exempted from mandatory disclosure under subsection (b), or excluded under subsection (c), are subject to disclosure upon an agency's receipt of a proper FOIA request from any person.

Florida's Sunshine Law



Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine Law was enacted in 1967. Today, the Sunshine Law can be found in [Chapter 286](#) of the Florida Statutes. The Sunshine Law establishes a basic right of access to most meetings of boards, commissions and other governing bodies of state and local governmental agencies or authorities.

Florida Statute, Chapter 119.01



119.01 General state policy on public records –

It is the policy of this state that all state, county, and municipal records are open for personal inspection and copying by any person.

Providing access to public records is a duty of each agency.

Sample letter to Congressional Representatives



(Date)

The Honorable (Title) (Name)

(Street Address)

(City), (State), (zip code)

Dear (Title) (Name):

I am a concerned (citizen) (client) living in (insert City), Florida, writing regarding the 13% cut in Ryan White funding to Palm Beach County.

Sample letter to Congressional Representatives



As you know the State of Florida ranks 2nd and Palm Beach County ranks 5th in the nation in AIDS case rates per 100,000. Ryan White funding is critical for the HIV infected community to receive both medical and support services vital to their health and well-being. Cuts to Ryan White funding will have a devastating impact to the underserved population. Many individuals living with HIV/AIDS are not eligible for state and federal insurance programs, and cannot afford to pay for their life sustaining medications.

Sample letter to Congressional Representatives



Your leadership is critical to continue to meet the needs of residents infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. Please ensure that your budget addresses the needs of the most vulnerable Floridians.

Sincerely,

(Your name)

(Your address)

(Your city), Florida, (your zip code)

Contact



Laurence P. Osband

Healthcare and Transportation Advocate

West Palm Beach Florida

<http://Laurence.Osband.us>

Laurence@Osband.us

561-582-9086