

Nothing About Us Without Us



Problem:

People with disabilities should be able to make decisions about how they want to live. While, in theory, disability services allow people to have autonomy, the rules for state assistance is very limiting. These rules can interfere with the choices that we want to make about our future. While many of the rules have purposes, the collective effect of these policies is that our rights are being slowly stripped away. One way to ensure that we can advocate collectively is to have at least one advocate on the team that is working to pass a certain bill to a law.

Without advocates on the team that effect disability policy, experts will claim that they know what is best. However, if nobody on the team has a disability, we can expect to have the same issue of experts claiming to know how to serve disabled people based on what scientists tell them. While scientists have good intentions, people with disabilities are people. They deserve the same authority to make decisions as the rest of us.

People who have disabilities must be in the room where bills are being discussed. We might need to figure out the legal terminology of bills but this should not keep our ideas from being translated into legal language. Advocates must generate ideas for government policies. By partaking in the writing of legal language, advocates will know what is in a bill.

Ask:

As advocates, we should know how legislation would affect our autonomy. Having at least one person with a disability on the task-force will give other policy makers the prospective of those with disabilities. Without this prospective, lawmakers will make decisions about us without knowing what would be the best for us.

While experts say they understand, they do not share the same prospective as a person with a disability. We need to speak to people on these task forces in order to be heard by those who are writing the legislation.

For more information please contact:

Self Advocates In Leadership sail@arcwa.org or (360) 357-5596, ext. 3

