



Artwork by Ivanova Smith

Self Advocates Say: Nothing About Us Without us!

The voices of people with Developmental Disabilities (DD) are often overlooked when decisions are made regarding what their services should look like and how they should be provided. A prime example is the Ruckelshaus workgroup that looked at the future of services for people with DD and provided the legislature with a report entitled [*Rethinking Intellectual and Developmental Disability Policy to Empower Clients, Develop Providers, and Improve Services*](#). Although the group decided what should be recommended to the legislature for the future of how and where services would be provided, there was NO INPUT FROM PEOPLE WITH DD.

Included in those recommendations was a plan for continued use of Residential Habilitation Centers (RHC) for crisis stabilization, which is not a goal self-advocates agree with. As **17 other states** have done, self-advocates want to see all services provided in a community setting, not in an outdated institutional setting.

The worst part of the report was the recommendation to build a brand new institution on the grounds of the current one at Fircrest. The Governor proposes to spend \$120 million on a building that would serve just over 100 people. The vast majority of families and guardians of people with DD do not want to send their loved ones to an institution in Shoreline where they will likely never see them again. People with DD got no say in whether that was a good plan or not.

Self-advocates and families are vocal about the need for housing in the community for people with DD. Though \$120 million was proposed for this new institution, NO MONEY was proposed for the Housing Trust Fund DD Set-aside! People with DD need community housing funded. About 70 residents in the RHCs have asked to move out and into a community setting, but there is no housing available. Half of those people have been waiting more than two years to get out. This is a violation of the Federal Olmstead decision.

Please listen to the voices who have the lived experience.

(Many adults with DD have been institutionalized and will tell you they wanted out.)

The people with DD who are verbal are trying to be heard.

(There are those who say they aren't really people with DD because they can talk, NOT TRUE!)

Even people who are not verbal can communicate their thoughts.

(Watch Julie share her experiences using an assistive communication device: [Julie's Story](#))

Self-advocates say:

HB 1080/SB 5083-Capital Budget: NO NEW Nursing Facility at Fircrest! Create Community Housing for DD.

ESSB 5284: Eliminate sub-minimum wage certificates for people with disabilities.

E2SHB 1227: Protect parents from abuse allegations without evidence.

ESSB 5268: Caseload Forecast services in the Developmental Disabilities Administration.

Please Listen to People with Developmental Disabilities!

Contact The Arc of Washington for more information (888) 754-8798



Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

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Nothing About Us Without Us!

Legislative Advocacy Should Include Us

Early in the legislative session, bills are introduced to the legislature to try to advance an interest of those introducing it. Self advocates are drafting a bill that would require a person with a disability to be on any taskforce designing bills which could affect our community. Currently, professionals can claim to have the “best interest” of their clients and can argue that they can advocate on our behalf. The self-advocate is the best resource for what people with disabilities want to see in disability legislation.

Right to Make Decisions

Much of the policies regarding the decisions we can or cannot make negatively impact our lives. For example, if we get married or work full time we risk losing our medical benefits. We want to make personal decisions concerning who we are around, our career, where we live, and how we age. While this is the intention of the current system, decisions are still being forced upon us by those claiming to be experts and the policies they create.

Current legislation

While we do not have a bill creating this task force in legislation, SAIL is following several bills that advance our interests.

SB 5284 -Sub-minimum wage- This bill would eliminate sheltered workshops and transition people into community based employment settings. Additionally it would provide incentives to retrain people who used to make sub-minimum wage so that they would get paid minimum wage or above.

HB 1227- parent protections- This bill would make it harder for babies to be taken away from their DD parents just because of their disability. DDA has resources for parents but child protective services takes the baby away before the biological parents have a chance to learn how to be good parents. We must work with these parents to give them a chance to care for their rightful children.

SB 5268- quality of life- Self-advocates believe that the state can lower the cost of servicing people if they live in the community rather than in an institution. This is because one waves some of the services one is entitled to when one leaves the institution. Although this seems bad, community services are tailored to the individual so a person would get nursing services only if the service was truly necessary.

HB 5083-nursing facility- Self advocates are opposed to the 120 bed purposed nursing home that is being built on the grounds of the Fircrest campus. While nursing services are important, a large facility isn't the answer. Rather, as COVID has taught us, smaller facilities scattered around the community are safer than centralized care facilities.

Another bill that we oppose is HB 1411, which supposedly expands the eligibility for who can be a caregiver for a person with a disability. However, SAIL is concerned that people who have a criminal record will abuse their clients rather than doing their jobs. While caregiving is not skilled labor, people with disabilities need to trust that their caregiver will not take advantage of them.

Tell your legislators – Nothing About Us Without Us!

Prepared by Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL)

Self-Advocates in Leadership (SAIL) is a coalition of more than 200 individuals with developmental disabilities who are interested in shaping public policy in Washington State. For more information about SAIL:

sail@arcwa.org or
1.888.754.8798, ext 3

YES! on ESSB5284
Eliminate sub-minimum wage certificates. Passed the Senate,. Vote in the House Labor & Work Standards. Committee March 17 to move to the House Floor.

NO! on HB 1080/SB 5083
Don't build a 120 bed facility at Fircrest. Add \$10 million to the Housing Trust Fund Set-aside.

YES! on SB 5268
Transform services for people with DD.

YES! On HB 1218
Ensure families have 24 access to loved ones in residential settings.

YES! On Fair Start for Kids Act, HB 1213/SB 5237

YES! On HB 1227
Parent protections for parents with DD to support parenting.

NO! on HB 1411
Concerned for caregivers with criminal backgrounds..